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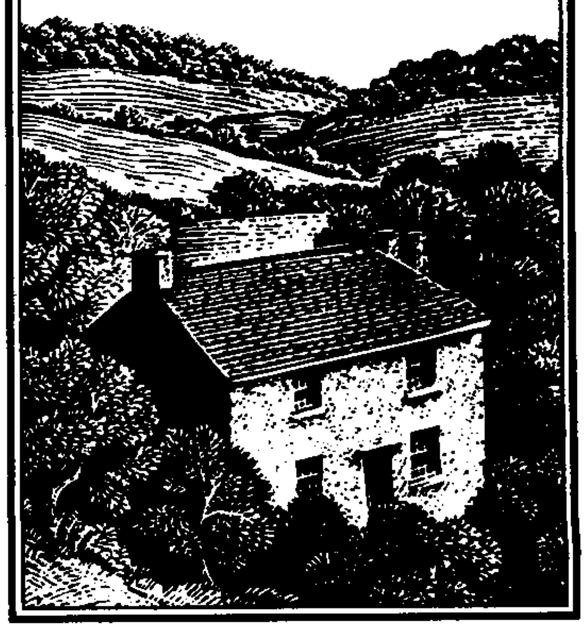

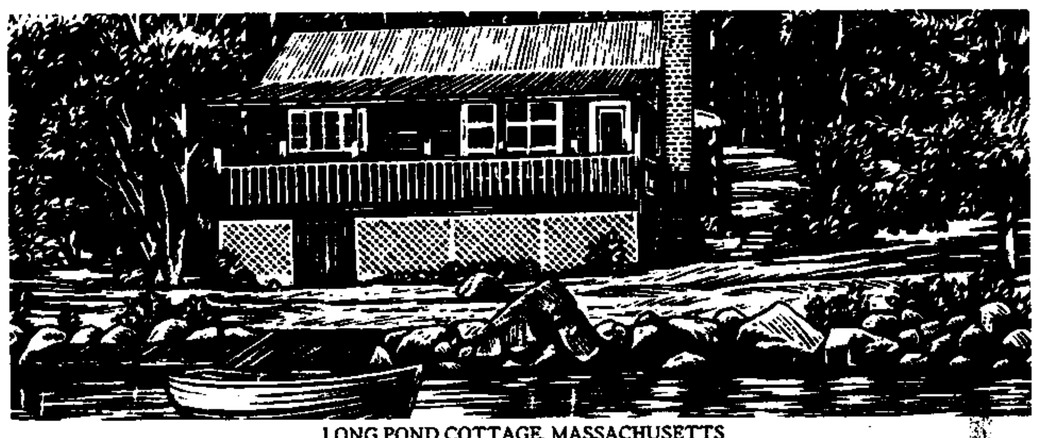

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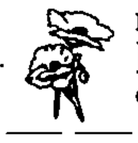

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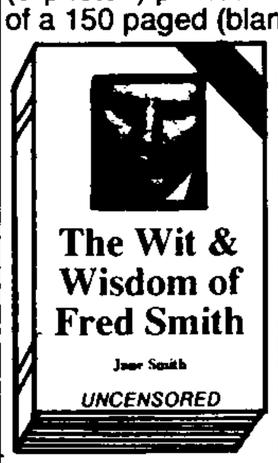

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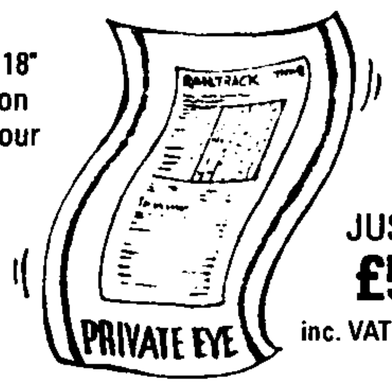

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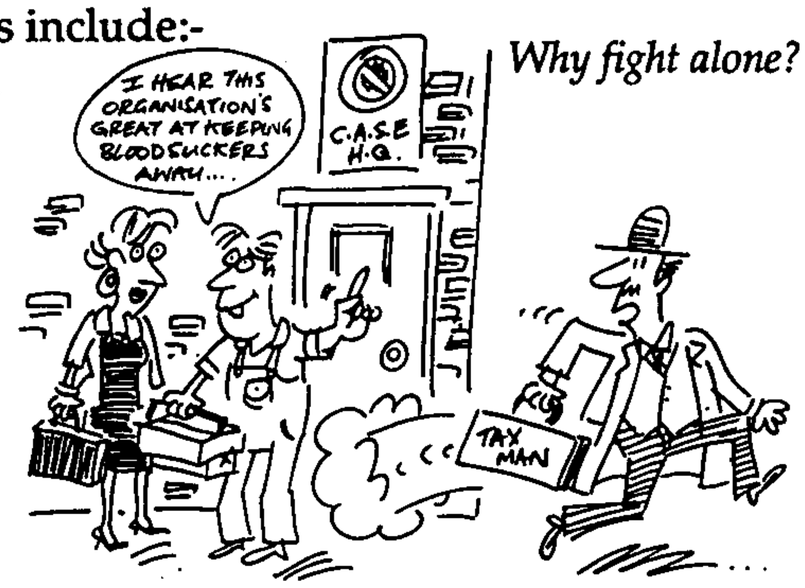

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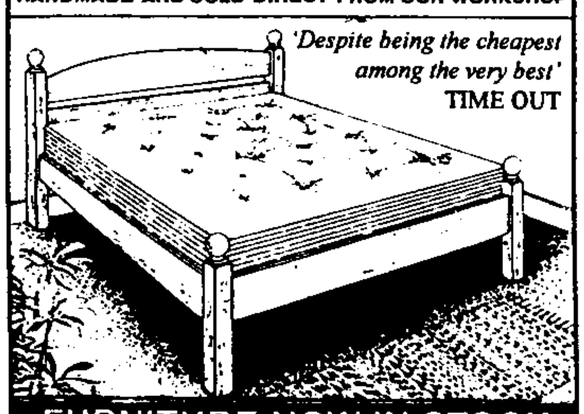

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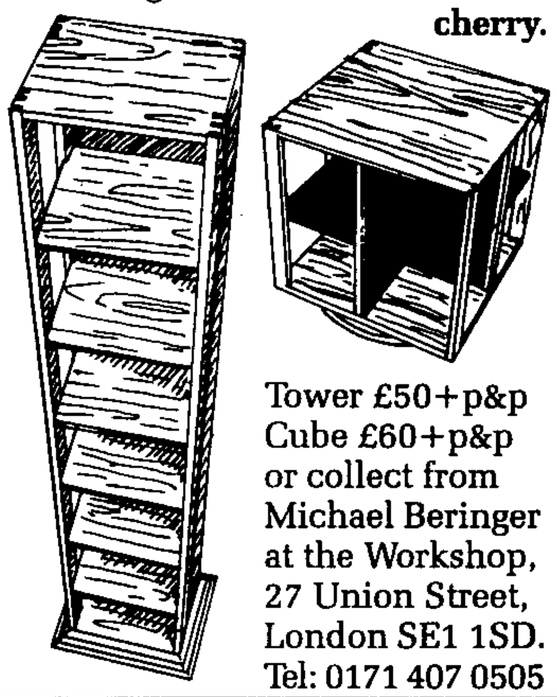

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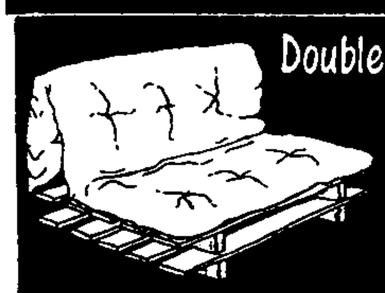

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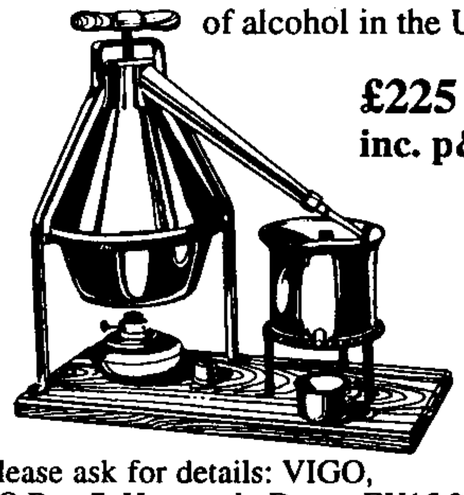

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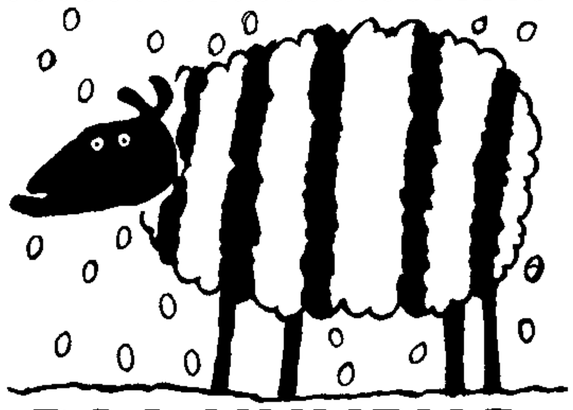

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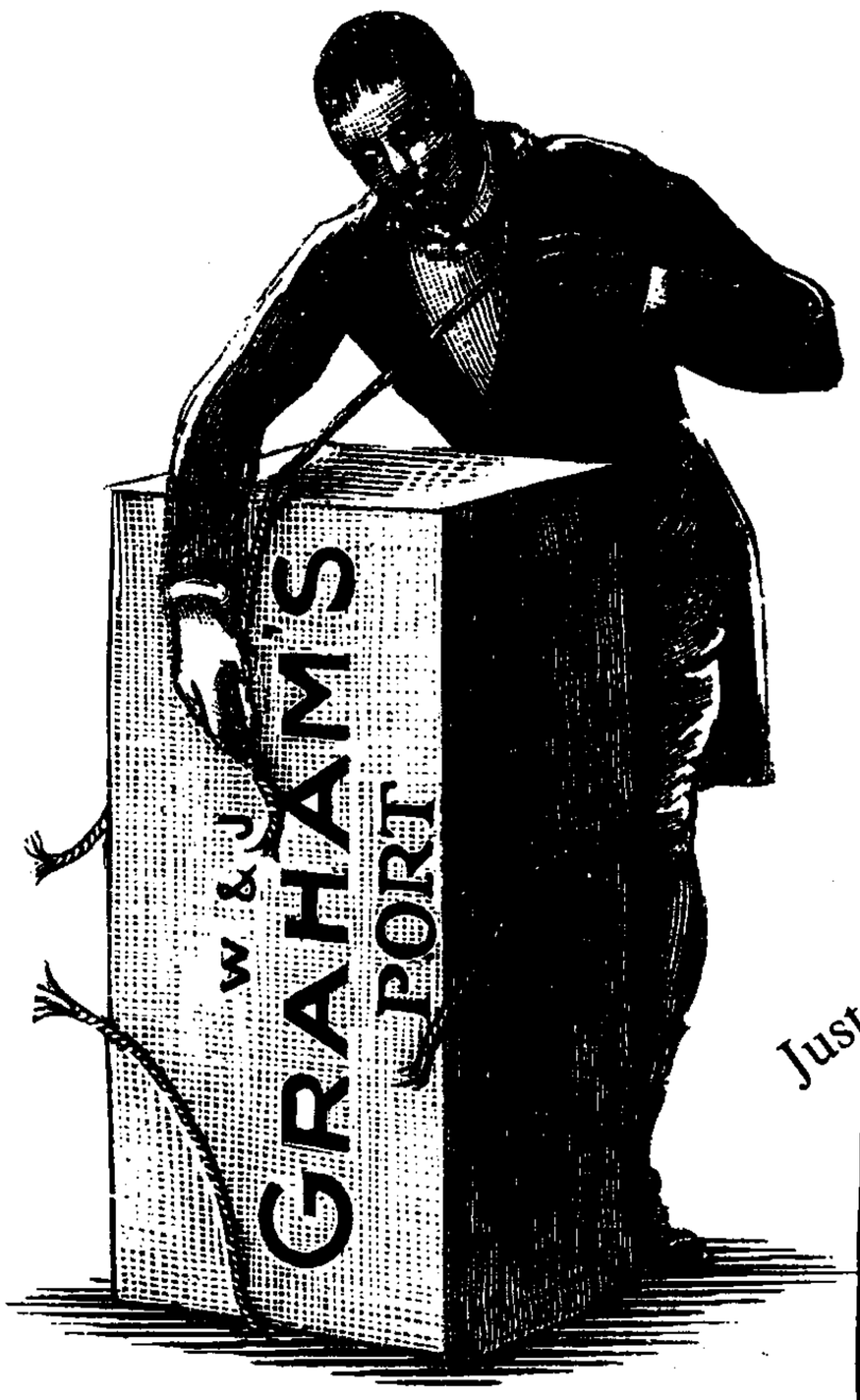

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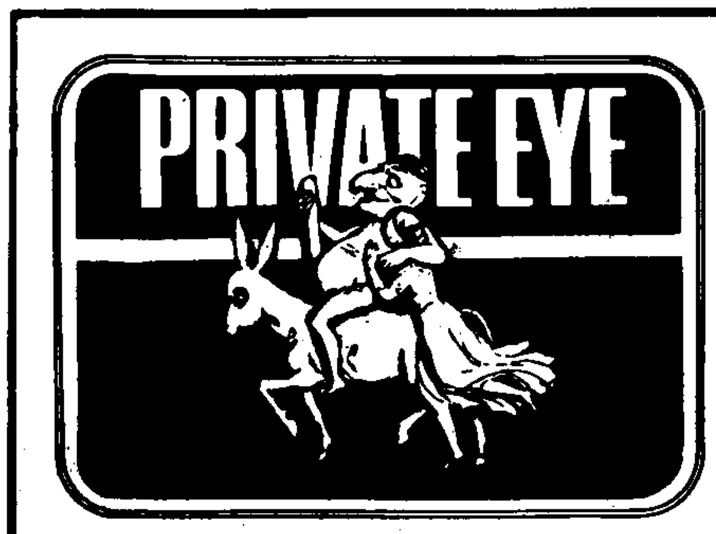


COLOUR SECTION

SHELL, the multinational oil giant, has so far got off relatively lightly in the chorus of outrage aimed at the Nigerian government for the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others. But this may change as the full facts of Shell's involvement in the murders becomes clearer.

In June this year, Labour's foreign affairs frontbencher Tony Lloyd was leaked a secret Nigerian army document about the Shell exploitation of the Ogoni land. The document left no doubt about the cooperation between the Nigerian army and the company. "Shell operations," it stated, "are still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken."

From first to last Shell representatives helped the Nigerian government to frame Saro-Wiwa. The British barrister Michael Birnbaum, who was sent to Nigeria by Article 19 and the England and Wales Bar Human Rights Committee to observe the Siro-Wiwa "trial", was continuously shocked by the evidence of Shell's involvement.

In his report, *Nigeria: Fundamental Rights Denied*, he observed: "Two of the principal witnesses now claim in affidavits that they were bribed to give false evidence." The affidavits, from Charles Danwi and Nayone Akpa, were summarised in an appendix.

Danwi was ordered to make an entirely false statement heavily implicating the defendants and to identify anyone the military pointed out to him. "He was told he would be given a house, a contract from Shell and some money. He was also placed on Level 5 in the Gokaria local government... He was given 30,000 Naira (about £250). At a later meeting, security agents, government officials and representatives of Shell were all present, and they all agreed." Later still, the bribe was increased to a million naira.

Akpa originally said he could not help the authorities with their charges. This was true. Later he was told by police to sign a statement implicating Saro-Wiwa and one of his co-defendants. He refused to sign. He was then told that if he did sign he would get promotion in local government, some money — and a contract with Shell. He signed.

THE government's deep concern about the tyranny in Nigeria has not spread to Saudia Arabia or the neighbouring Gulf states, where the main concern of the foreign office is to keep any dissident voices in check.

The activities of Saudi dissident Mohammad Masari, for example, have provoked two public statements from foreign secretary Malcolm Rifkind, the latest of which denounces Masari for "making mischief" (by denouncing dictatorship).

Nor has there been any foreign office protest about the brutal treatment in the United Arab Emirates (not Kuwait, as was wrongly reported in the last *Eye*) of a Filipina maid originally sentenced to death, now to be flogged with a hundred lashes, for stabbing her employer when he tried to rape her. Very lucrative arms contracts, at stake in both countries, have softened ministers enthusiasm for human rights.

This approach has spread to the Saudi satellite Bahrein. After a recent trip to that country, where no one has voted since 1975 and where hundreds of opponents of the government are in prison, Nicholas "Fatty" Soames, arms minister, complained to the BBC that World Service coverage of Bahreini affairs was embarrassing the regime, and therefore the British government.

Bert Mapp, a distinguished writer on Bahrein, has recently been expelled from the British Bahrein Society for voicing his opposition to the regime. The expulsion did not disturb "Fatty", who was the honoured guest speaker at the sumptuous Bahreini Society dinner on 14 November. Previous guest speakers have included his two illustrious predecessors as minister for arms sales: Sir Archibald Hamilton and Mr Jonathan Aitken.

JUST FANCY THAT

JUNE 1989: In Britain Shell pleads guilty to polluting the Mersey river and is fined £1 million. Mr Justice Mars-Jones decides the company has not discharged its duty to the community — but has discharged 40 tonnes of crude oil instead. Because the people of Merseyside are also petrol consumers, Shell immediately grovels with a hefty donation to the arts and culture and cleans up the mess with all speed.

1980: An oil spill measuring three miles pollutes the Muepene river in the Niger Delta. The inhabitants of the Muepene river have no consumer power at all... so there are no cultural centres there and no clean-up teams, just a lingering mess that is still waiting to be cleaned up.

THE quangocrats running the new Environment Agency, whose remit will cover the National Rivers Authority, the pollution inspectorate and the London waste regulation authority, will be busy, busy, busy.

Tory luminaries who will run the agency will also take over the jobs of 86 waste regulation authorities across England and Wales and the lands waste division of the department of the environment.

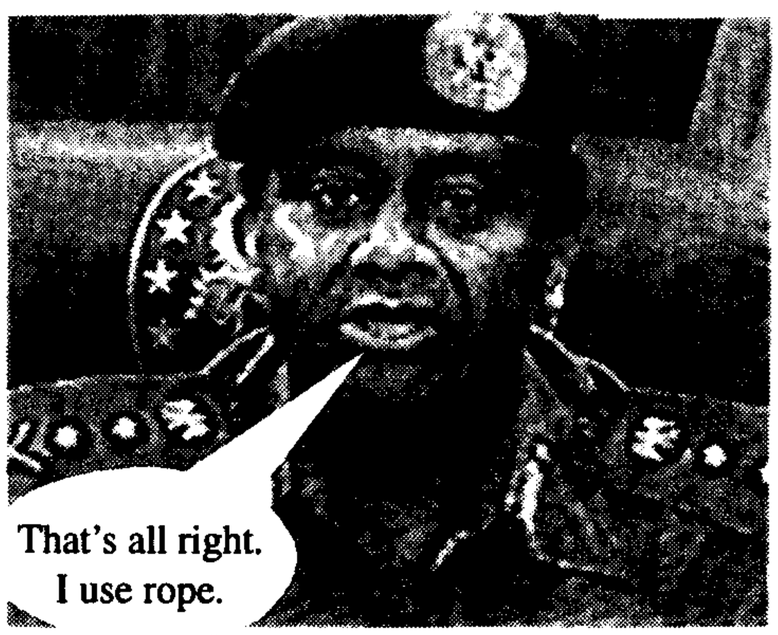
Let us hope that such notables as Christopher Hampson (who chairs privatised Yorkshire Electricity and is a director of enthusiastic Tory donor Ready Mixed Concrete) and the wealthy Huntingdon Tory Lord de Ramsey, don't over do it.

DROUGHT-stricken Yorkshire Water is using its newly-found customer relations skills to top up its profits.

The company is holding a seminar for the PR industry on how to improve communication skills and handle the media. Appropriately the £35-a-head session ends with a lecture on "crisis management".

● *Hallo! to Prince Charles* 7
● *Tory Spin Doctors* 11
● *Delia Smith's Recipe* 25
● *Footnotes on the Lottery* 26

BRITAIN STOPS ARMS SALES TO NIGERIA



Street of Shame

WITHIN minutes of the announcement of the "resignation" of Sir Nick Lloyd as "editor", there were scenes of inconsolable, er, joy at the *Daily Express*.

Smiles only disappeared when hacks learnt that a possible buyer of the sickly group was the only snob who fawns even more shamelessly over the Tories: Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Fans of Sir Nick point to Nikki Chesworth as having helped put the final nail in his coffin. As features editor she was responsible for puffing the ludicrously complicated and expensive promotion of the TV gameshow *Raise the Roof* on which Sir Nick had staked his shirt. One of the prizes was an £80,000 house, but Chesworth still managed to generate zero reader interest.

There was some genuine mourning in the building — among the talentless executives who saw their careers suddenly crash in flames. Even the oafish bully and terminally anaesthetized deputy Craig "Bogbrush" Mackenzie fell silent for a nano-second. More devastated was Heather "Hysterical" McGlone, preposterous mini-skirted "associate editor". She fled back to her office in tears. Back-stabbing intensified, with pisspoor columnist Phillipa Kennedy sneaking to Sir Nick that Alan Cochrane, editor of the Scottish edition, had made some mildly critical remarks on the radio. Sir Nick rang him and snarled: "Don't you think I'm finished — I'll remember this."

One benefactor of a rudderless ship, however, was bogus Old Etonian Paul Callan, who filed a "colour" piece from the Rosemary West trial naming the judge three times as Mr Justice Cantley. Cantley presided over the Thorpe trial 16 years ago and is now dead. But then no one at the *Depress* can tell the difference.

Sir Nick, meanwhile, let none of this unseemly grubbing curtail his deep interest in freebies. Some weeks ago he mentioned to travel manager Fred Chalk that he and Lady Bollard would require two first class return tickets to New York on 19 November. Suddenly on 31 October — the day before his "resignation" — Sir Nick requested immediate delivery of his tickets. Fancy that!

AS the *Mirror* **takes on** *Telegraph* **pop columnist Tony Parsons at £180,000 a year, colleagues in the** *Indescribablyboring* **stable are absurdly short of money.**

Independent on Sunday political hack Paul Routledge was recently summoned to the phone in the Commons lobby to take a call from one of David "Rommel" Montgomery's minions in Mirror Group accounts. How could Routledge justify claiming a £2.80 London Transport Travelcard on expenses several weeks ago?

Routledge travels on buses and tubes rather than taxis to save his employers money, and said a Travelcard was cheaper than separate tickets for each journey. In that case, said the clerk, he must itemise every bus and tube before payment would be authorised. In that case, said "Routy", the clerk could fuck off.

Meanwhile Imre Karacs, the *Independent*'s man in Bonn, has written to the "arseholes" in accounts: "Financial situation critical. Accounts now DM 13,000 overdrawn and the bank suspended payments today. Despite promises of dispatching the DM 22,000 this bureau is owed, not a pfennig has been forthcoming... I am now returning to England. Over and out."

Emma Daly in Sarajevo is similarly on her uppers, and *Indie* hacks who use Mercury phones had them cut off last month because managing director Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson hadn't paid the bills. Still, not everyone at Canary Wharf is feeling the pinch. "Rommel" can now exercise options on 1,475,409 shares, yielding a profit of £1.6 million. And Wislon's share options also come to fruition next month offering a windfall of at least £800,000 — more than enough for the odd Travelcard.

ALTHOUGH it is many months since Eve Pollard ceased to edit the *Sunday Express*, **she still appears to be in what psychiatrists would call a state of "denial".**

This, at least, is the only plausible explanation for a stash of invoices submitted to Express Newspapers two weeks ago by the company's regular taxi-firm, London & City Carriages. One was for a journey by Lady Lloyd from her house in Hampstead to Albemarle Street, London W1; another covered a lunchtime outing to the English Tourist Board. All had been signed by her ladyship and charged to the *Express* account.

Jim Anderson, deputy managing director of Express Newspapers, has now returned the dockets to the cab company, pointing out that "they appear to be journeys undertaken by Lady Lloyd, who, as you know, is no longer with this company, and should be billed direct to her home".

THE latest victim of Lord Stevens's frenzied cost cutting at the Express Group is Rupert Bear.

The stricken *Sunday Express* decided to save the £400 it costs each week to run the paper's oldest, much loved cartoon character in its colour magazine by axing him. But after hundreds of distraught letters from geriatric readers, panic-struck executives realized they had killed the character mid-adventure. The poor bear was revived for the few weeks necessary to complete his final escapade.

Rupert was now been laid to rest — and is expected to be followed shortly by the *Sunday Express*. Both are 103.

ALTHOUGH he doesn't take over from Stewart Steven as editor of the London *Evening Standard* **until the end of the year, Max "Hitler" Hastings is already ensconced at Associated Newspapers in Kensington where he is smoking cigars and killing people's careers.**

Last week he arranged meetings with all senior editorial staff — except features editor Alex "Rentboy" Renton, who immediately rang the editor's secretary. "There's been a mistake," he trilled. "I don't think there has," was the chilling reply.

Realising his card is marked Rentboy has been desperately praising associate editor Sarah Sands in the hope that she takes him with her when she de-camps to the *Telegraph*. "She's priceless," he gushed pathetically to the *Guardian*.

Another hack whose future at the *Standard* is all behind him is Stephen Glover, the paper's press commentator, who wrote several scathing pieces about Hitler's stewardship of the *Daily Telegraph*. During a recent weekend houseparty at Chequers Hitler saw the *Standard*'s outgoing editor and boomed: "I hope Glover is going to play the white man and do the decent thing." What, Steven inquired, did he mean? "I mean," Hitler continued cheerfully, "that I hope he's going to walk the plank."

Adam Edwards, oleaginous editor of *ES Magazine*, has discovered that he owns the same make of shotgun as Hastings and reckons this will prove a firm bond between them. Hastings might not be so impressed if he knew of Edwards's exploit a year ago when he shot a white pheasant — an appalling blunder on a driven shoot, especially if the bird is the pet of the host's daughter.

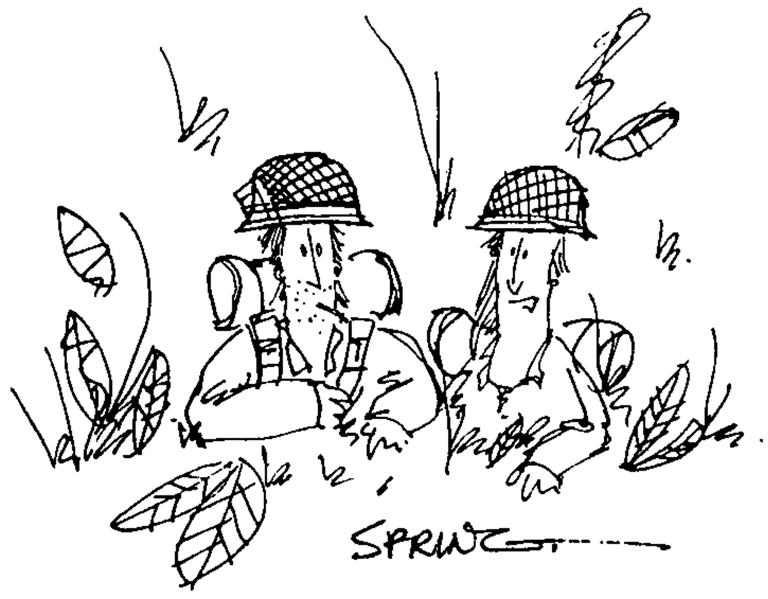
But the supreme act of arse-licking belongs to features hack Mark Honigsbaum: he is calling his new-born son "Hitler". Well, he's calling him Max, anyway.

THE behaviour of *Observer* **editor Andrew Jaspan becomes ever more eccentric.**

Independent hackette Mary Braid rang through on his private line the other day and asked to speak to the editor. "No," Jaspan replied, "he's not here." Whereupon he put the phone down.

Observer hacks are also puzzled by his apparent *volte face* towards the immensely wealthy Barclay twins. Only a few weeks ago he ran a huge and hostile profile of the brothers in the *Observer*. Then, as reported in the *Eye*, he published a grovelling apology to them for no obvious reason. Now, following the Barclays' acquisition of *The Scotsman* and *Scotland on Sunday*, he has written a piece for the *Guardian* saying what splendid fellows they are.

Will Jaspan shortly be appointed editor-in-chief of the Barclays' Scottish newspapers? We shall see.



"Never mind. We'll win in the film"

WHEN Piers "Boy" Morgan took over as editor of the *Daily Mirror* **every executive arrived early dressed in their Sunday best. This led a bemused "Boy" to remark: "It's just like a wedding!"**

Kate "Libel" Thornton, secretary turned star show-biz writer, approached her new boss with trepidation, muttering: "I suppose this means my number's up?" Replied the great man, quick as a flash: "Know what, Kate — that's the first thing you've got right in three months!"

Meanwhile betting on the fate of legendary deputy editor Brendan "Chucky" Parsons reached panic pitch when Chucky himself appeared to fall on his own sword by immediately departing for five days' holiday. Savage *Mirror* cartoonist Griffin even put the hapless Parsons in last Friday's cartoon: a line of "nutters" queuing for a turn to snog the Princess of Wales — an unshaven "Chucky" at the tail end.

PS: A footnote to the revelation in the last *Eye* about the *Mirror* killing its exclusive on Lord Sterling of Zeebrugge being caught travelling without a rail ticket... The story was spiked by Colin Myler in his last days as editor. Myler is a frequent (free) P&O passenger, who sailed on the maiden voyage of Lord Sterling's luxury liner Oriana and ordered a double-page spread on its magnificence upon his return.

MAD cow disease, like flesh-eating bugs, makes a good horror yarn for sensation-seeking *News of the World* **readers. What a surprise, then, that smooth in-house doctor Hilary Jones plays down the latest outbreak of human cases of the disease.**

In the *Screws* he wrote: "I don't know any doctors worried about the risk of CJD [Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease] from infected beef. You see the disease in life-long vegetarians."

Readers who turned to the *Screws* pisspoor magazine were then treated to another dose of Dr Jones's bedside manner, still on the question of beef. "People are astounded when I tell them that over half the small amount of fat in lean beef and pork is actually unsaturated — not the type that's associated with raised blood cholesterol," he noted, in an entirely detached fashion, while writing in an advertisement feature for, er, British Meat.

WILL SELF, the *Observer*'s **cadaverous new restaurant critic, has been getting out and about. "Casting all of my fears of being buried alive to one side," he reported last month, "I entrained for Paris on the** *sous-Manche* **express."**

At La Coupole he went into raptures over an *Escalope de Saumon Frais à L'Oseille*: "The salmon... was suffused with the strawberry and salmon sauce to a high level of deliquescence." Alas, it seems Self had also cast aside his French dictionary, for the deliquescent strawberries existed only in Self's drug-addled imagination.

The French word for strawberry is *fraise*; *frais* means, quite simply, "fresh".

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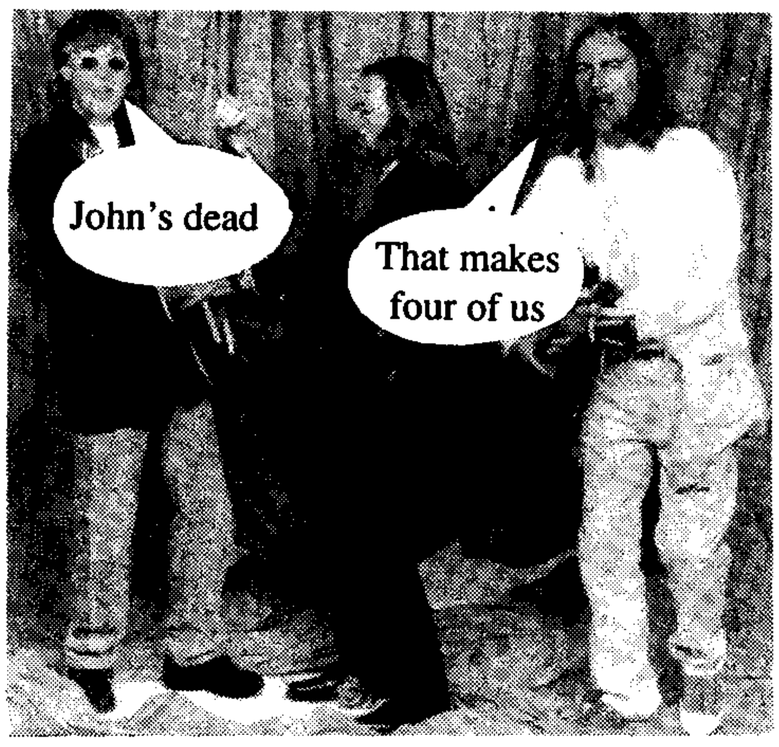
BEATLES REUNION



WORLD OF ETHICS

THE identification of leukaemia victim "Child B" as 11-year-old Jaymee Bowen is posing dilemmas for the tabloids milking her story. (*Shurely "who are fighting on her behalf with quiet dignity, in the hope that she gets the treatment the doctors have refused her"? Ed.*)

A heart-wringing cash appeal has been set up by the *News of the World*; and the girl has been taken on a "dream shopping trip" by the *Sun*. But how are the two papers handling the girl's father, David Bowen, who faces housing benefit fraud charges and accusations that he less than 100 percent straight in his business dealings?

The *Sun* has published a fairly sympathetic story about the benefit fraud charges — but it was by no means keen to publish the full story told to it by Northampton house-owner Suzanne Knight.

Knight employed a company called Trojan Property Management to rent out her property in Northampton. When she wanted to move back in, Trojan was unable to move the tenant out. Even worse, though Trojan was still receiving the rent on her behalf, it ceased passing the money on to Suzanne Knight, whose mortgage arrears began to build up. When she tried to pursue Trojan for the £6,000 she had lost, she found that the company had been dissolved. Its director was David Bowen.

The *News of the World* showed little interest in the story, even though the reporter told Knight he had been inundated with calls about Bowen's business dealings. And when Knight approached the *Sun* with the story it displayed a similar lack of enthusiasm: it too was unwilling to throw away the sympathy vote as it had just taken David Bowen's daughter out shopping. It's tough being a tear-jerking tabloid.

LIBEL NEWS

***VANITY Fair*'s article on Harrods boss Mohamed Fayed has provoked a libel writ from the Egyptian businessman. He apparently objects to the article's allegations of racism and harassment.**

Some of the witnesses queuing to appear in defence of the magazine will be members of Usdaw, the shop workers' union which featured in the *Eye* (870) when it fought 25 tribunal cases against Harrods on behalf of workers who had been unfairly dismissed or were victims of racial harassment.

In all 25 cases Harrods coughed up between £2,000 and £6,000. Usdaw told the *Eye* at the time: "There were overtones of racism in many cases. The number of dismissals recently has been extraordinarily high."

Vanity Fair's publisher, Condé Nast Publications, might like to call Ahmed Boudeffeur to the witness stand. He worked as a head waiter in Harrods restaurant for four years before he was suddenly sacked for bad timekeeping. His case was settled in his favour before it reached tribunal. Or it could call Joseph Gable, an assistant in Harrods food hall for three and a half years. He threw away a box of rotten strawberries and was immediately sacked for "neglect of company policy". He won £4,500 at a tribunal. And so on...

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! MY PHONE trills and a highly-placed Buckingham Palace flunkey bursts into tears: Prince Charles's desperate press officers have been unable to persuade a single newspaper or television hack to accompany him on his exciting tour of Germany and Latvia. Not even the Press Association!

Poor Alan Persival and dear Sandy Henney spent the entire week before take-off pleading pitifully with tabloid oiks whom they would normally cross the road to avoid. Promises of "exclusive" access to Brian met with barely muffled sniggers.

"Why?" sobbed a distraught courtier. "Charles will be visiting a BMW plant, a housing estate — and an organic farm!" Gently I explain that the Princess of Wales has graciously invited me on a far less glamorous trip to Argentina to help heal the wounds of the Falklands War.

Diana's flight to Buenos Aires is more than a trifle over-subscribed — unlike Brian's which lifted off for Berlin with the man who would be king accompanied by a solitary chronicler, an obscure and slightly grubby freelance. How the mighty are fallen.

HALLO! **NO ONE in the country is talking about anything except Dominic Lawson** *(shurely shome mishtake? Ed).* **Conrad Black is, of course, the Marquesa's best friend so I can reveal that contrary to rumours the** *Torygraph* **owner was not at all angered by Alan Clark's entertaining** *Spectator* **attack on Dominic Lawson, Black's new editor at the** *Sunday Telegraph*.

Black's ambitious wife Barbara Amiel certainly was, however; and having persuaded herself that Clark's remarks about Lawson were anti-semitic, she told dear old Conrad to order the *Speccie*'s **new editor Frank Johnson to apologise forthwith.**

But Johnson was not in an apologising mood. What on earth will happen? Does anyone care?

HALLO! MEANWHILE the dishy Alan Clark is none too pleased by the suggestion that his animosity towards Lawson is motivated by anti-semitism. Visiting the Israeli embassy last week to sign the book of condolence for Yitzhak Rabin, he made a point of looking through the previous signatures. "Is Dominic Lawson's name here?" he wondered aloud. It wasn't.

There is a much simpler explanation for the feud between Clark and Lawson, however. When Alan Clark's affairs with the various Harkess women were exposed last year, Lawson rang Jane Clark and asked if she could supply him with further dirt on her husband. Being the loyal wife she is, she promptly told Alan Clark — who concluded, understandably, that Lawson was an s-h-one-t and vowed to take his revenge. Which, thanks to musical chairs at Black's *Telegraph* and *Spectator*, he now has. What on earth will happen? *(You've done this bit. Ed.)*

HALLO! **HOW does Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill do it? No sultry babe can resist the hunky Casabrilla-nova's charms, it seems!**

On the day of the premature demise of Harry Percy, the 11th Duke of Bimbos (*"Northumberland", shurely?*)**, our playboy broadcaster was lunching the lovely, dusky Jackie St Clair, a former fancy of the fat duke himself.**

Jackie is almost a photofit of the dream Brillo-babe: half-Hawaiian, half-Italian, she is a former Page Three stunna who with great dignity once allowed the pop-singer Prince to nibble honey-coated peanuts from her navel. Jackie's other former admirers include Andrew Ridgeley of *Wham!* **and footballer Charlie Nicholas. Honeyed Andy, olive Jackie — photo, please!**

ONE of my favourite men in foreign parts is the Amir of Bahrein. He is just so generous with those Rolex watches!

The only problem is that the he can be outspoken and sometimes says the wrong thing — as when he entertained the former Liberal leader David Steel and his adviser, a Dr Attul, not long ago.

In the course of some pleasant small talk Sir David asked His Wealthiness if he was planning to come to London soon. "Oh, I doubt it," replied the Amir. "I don't like London much nowadays — there are too many Indians there!"

There was an embarrassed silence because Dr Attul is Indian. But he is a very light-skinned Indian and was wearing glasses. I'm sure the Amir didn't take offence — in fact I know he didn't because he gave Dr Attul a Rolex!

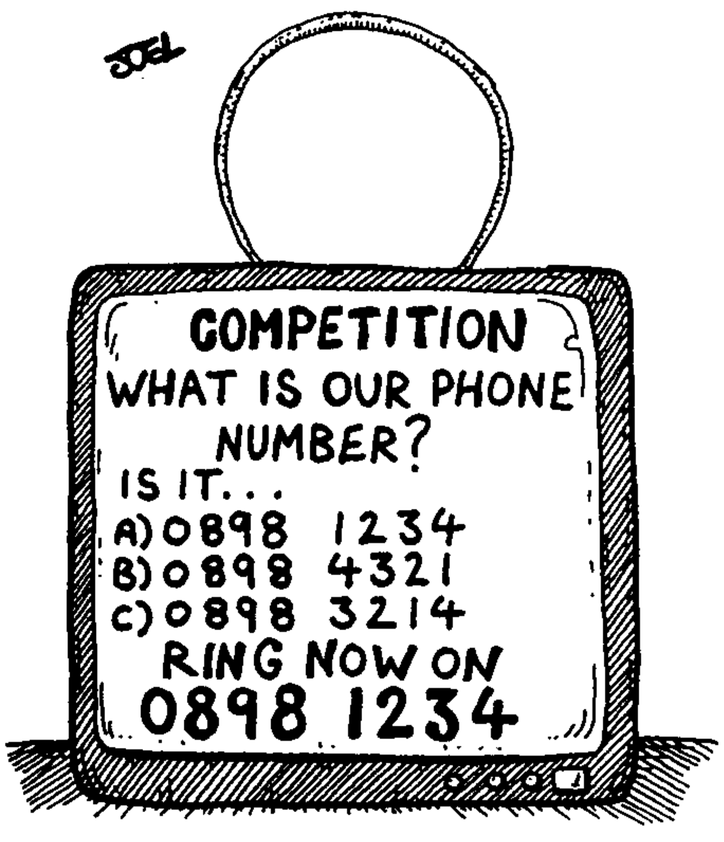
'The Marquesa'

British Gas NEWS

THE number of complaints against British Gas in September rose by 98 per cent compared to the same month last year.

British Gas was determined not to get bogged down in depressing detail, however. So it put a brave face on the achievement in *Gas News*, its in-house newspaper, and told the complaints story in a rather different way: "British Gas has topped a MORI poll of customer satisfaction with standards of service and value for money."

This was a novel conclusion considering that complaints to the gas consumers' council were higher in the first half of this year, at 24,999, than in the whole of 1994. *Gas News* reached its upbeat opinion by comparing gas with other utilities which apparently scored even lower for customer satisfaction. As gas customers were 3 per cent more satisfied with their service than electricity customers with theirs, the privatised utility obviously has nothing to worry about.



"I DECLARE all my interests as entered in the register of members' interests," Sir Edward Heath announced during the Nolan debate last week. "None of them has any connection with parliamentary affairs."

According to the register, Sir Edward is an adviser to Arthur Andersen and Company, the China Investment and Development Fund Ltd, Kleinwort Benson China Management Ltd and the China Ocean Shipping Company — for which he is handsomely rewarded. (No one knows how handsomely since the money is paid through his private unlimited company, Dumpton Gap, but a recent conservative estimate was that he earns at least £250,000 a year.)

Did it really not cross the minds of these companies, when they hired the Grocer, that he is a well-connected politician? Apparently not. In which case, why do they employ him at all? It cannot, surely, be for his skills in double-entry book-keeping — or, still less, for the sheer pleasure of his company.

What is even more puzzling is why he declares these consultancies in the register of members' interests if, as he insists, they have no connection with parliamentary affairs. The purpose of the register, as set out in House of Commons Paper No 326 (1991-92), is "to provide information of any pecuniary interest... which might reasonably be thought by others to influence his or her actions, speeches or votes in Parliament, or actions taken in his or her capacity as a Member of Parliament".

Perhaps Sir Edward might care to enlighten us. But he probably won't. For, as he told the House last week, "we have a right to privacy".

ELOQUENT and moving were the arguments deployed by Ann Taylor, Labour MP for Dewsbury and shadow leader of the Commons, recommending the House accept all the recommendations of the Nolan commission — especially the ban on MPs being associated with parliamentary lobbyists.

No MP had the bad taste to refer to the controversy in the parliamentary Labour party in March 1994 when the *Independent* revealed that Mrs Taylor had become a paid director of Westminster Communications, one of the more celebrated parliamentary lobbyists, whose board included Menzies Campbell (Liberal) and Sir Marcus Fox and Sir Keith Speed (Tory). So great was the backbenchers' unpublished protest that Taylor quietly left the board and no more was said about it.

PS: Thanks to her own persuasiveness she will soon have to reveal how much she is paid for her advice by ATL, a teachers' union not affiliated to the TUC.

THE leak of damning exam statistics at Islington schools gave the Tory tabloids another chance to attack Labour's education record.

The revelations were deeply embarrassing to the Labour council — but less so to the Labour leadership since they justified the decision of Islington resident Tony Blair to send his son to an opted out school outside the borough.

At the time of the leak the head of Islington's "quality unit", Paul Corrigan, claimed that he had misdialled while trying to fax the report to Councillor Tal Michael, who works for a Labour frontbencher — his daddy, Alun — at the Commons.

Ignoring why Corrigan should have been sending the report to Michael in the first place when no one in the education department even knew it existed, the person who actually received the fax was Tory MP Cheryl Gillan, whose fax number is entirely different from Alun Michael's.

Gillan's office is right next to Michael's, however, and slipping the document under the door would have been a piece of cake. Any conspiracy theorists out there?

SOCIAL security secretary Peter Lilley, a fan of pre-election tax cuts, has been desperate to cut his department's budget and has drawn up plans to chop housing benefit and industrial injury payments.

Meanwhile the quango that will administer any cuts, the Benefits Agency, is spending hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money tarting up its image. Out goes the accurate term "claimant" and in comes the more consumer-friendly term "customer" — even though claimants are no more "customers" than rail "passengers" were before them.

The quango has also redesigned logos, put staff into uniform and run extensive "Have a nice day" reeducation programmes for its battle-weary workers. Thus when a "customer" in an inner city dole office is refused extra benefit to clothe her children she will presumably be told she can complain to a "customer services manager" who will be pleased to help.

Another PR gambit has been the agency's own "quality award" for which dole offices will compete among themselves. The agency has introduced its "Framework for Quality" with typical corporate mumbo-jumbo — "the core values, the vision, the change programme" etc. While Lilley targets benefit cheats he ignores the obvious subjects for cutbacks under his very nose.

DAVID SHAW, telegenic Tory MP for Dover, is spearheading the heroic battle against the proposed tax on profits from share options.

In a moving speech in the Commons on 25 October he spoke up for what he called the "thin cats" — the poor little people whose tiny slice of share options keeps them going through hard times. Shaw made two points. The average profit from exercising share options, he said, was a mere £16,500; and only "some" exercised their options as soon as they could.

Mr Shaw was answered by Michael Jack, financial secretary to the treasury, who revealed from government research that 95 percent of share option holders flog them off as soon as they can; and that the average profit is £45,000.

ROBERT Banks has at finally done something interesting after 21 years of representing Harrogate in the Commons.

Having failed even to reach nonentity status on the backbenches, he boldly jumped after his constituency association decided to have a contest rather than automatically reselect a man who still hasn't a home in the constituency.

His second interesting act was to reply, when asked if Norman Lamont might step into the seat: "What about Donald Duck or Mickey Mouse?" If he'd shown even a hint of such derring-do over the past two decades, Banks might not have been ditched by local Tories desperate to fend-off the Lib Dems.

JOHN MARSHALL, Tory MP for Hendon South, has beaten Finchley MP Hartley Booth in the battle for the new constituency of Finchley and Golders Green.

Booth was defeated after a stormy selection meeting at which Marshall was accused of planting questions about Booth's private life — in particular his poetic affairette with student and Commons researcher Emily Barr.

Marshall's campaign manager for the Finchley and Golders Green seat was Mike Love, a Thatcherite whom Booth narrowly defeated in the battle for the old Finchley constituency. Tory feelings have been so enraged by events that more than half the local Tories are said to be threatening to resign.

"Got any Nigerian fruit I can refuse to buy?"

ANDREW ROSINDELL, a star of the deeply unattractive Young Conservative movement, is now the proud Tory candidate for Thurrock in Essex.

The main architect and fixer in Rosindell's selection has been local Alf Garnett figure Ted Attwell, a leading member of the Monday Club and ex-National Front. A few years ago he shocked Essex voters when he announced that he was in favour of "getting rid of wogs, Jews and Irish". Two local Tories who complained were banned from their local Conservative club.

Attwell was also once chief cheerleader for MP Harvey Proctor in Billericay — until Harvey's political career "bottomed out" over some nonsense with rent boys and he had to become a shirtlifter (*"-seller", shurely? Ed.*) in Richmond.

This time Attwell has found a card-carrying hetero right-winger. Lucky old Thurrock.

'Backbiter'

SIGNAL FAILURES

RAILTRACK is scrapping more than half its emergency-response trains.

On 15 October it cut the number of cranes and breakdown trains from 13 to five. Rail-borne cranes will now take longer to reach accidents, increasing the chances of death or serious injury to those trapped under tons of carriage. There are now no cranes in Scotland and only one, based in west London, for the entire south-east of England. The nearest crane to the massive rail network in Strathclyde is on Teesside, nearly 250 miles away.

Railtrack says the change reflects a decline in rail accidents and that road cranes will be used in most cases. Road cranes are victim to traffic congestion, of course, while rail cranes have always had priority on the rail network.

A leaked memo reveals that the accident-response budget is instead being spent on a fascinating "new range of contractual procedures". These include important things like arguing about who gets the bill — or as Railtrack calls it "billing and settlement at train operating company level supported by a request and certification procedure to ensure the customer is correctly identified and the right party is billed without the risk of dispute".

IN the days of "deeply inefficient" BR, to quote John Major, maintenance of electrical and mechanical equipment at big stations was handled internally. Railtrack has now contracted the work to Hall and Towse... who have sub-contracted it to the local BR maintenance units... who were the people who did it in the first place.

Thus when escalators broke down at a major station recently, the electrician had to twiddle his thumbs while the Railtrack help-desk was contacted... which contacted Hall and Towse... which reported the fault to the local BR maintenance unit... who eventually told the electrician to get on with it, 90 minutes *after* he would have started the repair in the "deeply inefficient" olden days.

"FOLLOWING a number of leaks to the press of information contained in the Railtrack national incident room daily log, Railtrack wish to control the availability of the log more tightly," said a Railtrack memo last month.

"They intend to distribute the log only to 'secure' fax machines or by hard copy on dark-coloured paper which will be difficult to photocopy." In the interests of open debate on safety the memo was leaked to *Private Eye* within days.

'Dr B. Ching'

NOOKS and CORNERS

POOR old Derby. You might well have thought enough was enough and that quite enough self-inflicted damage had been done to the city in the 1960s.

Scores of Georgian buildings were eliminated and the city centre was ravaged by comprehensive redevelopment. Not even the 18th century Assembly Rooms could be saved. Big Jim Sterling, in his competition entry for the new civic centre, was going to leave the facade absurdly propped leaning backwards at 45°, but Casson & Conder, who got the job and did their worst, found no use for it at all. At least the facade was reerected at Crich Tramway Museum.

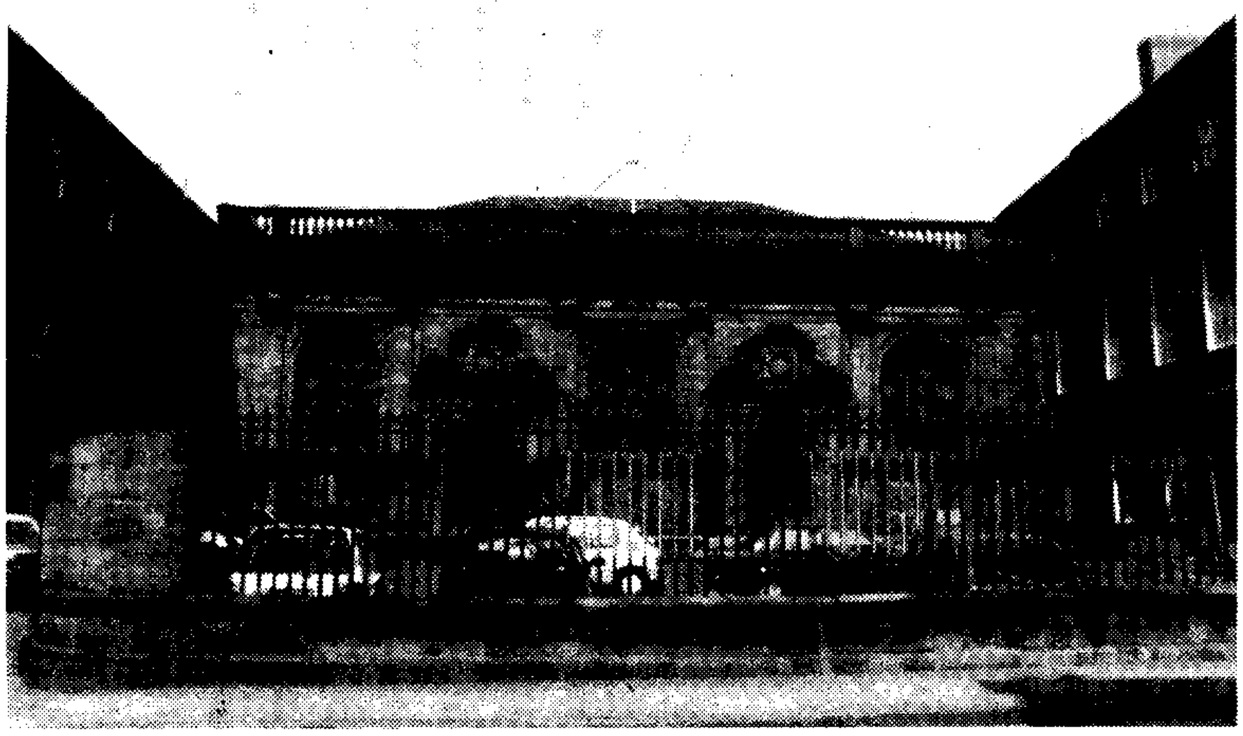
But no: enough was not enough. Now the city fathers and their compliant officials are set to smash up the most interesting group of historic buildings that is left: the old crown court complex in St Mary's Gate. This is remarkable by any standards. In the centre is the County Hall of a rare date: 1659 (listed grade I) with, behind, a Georgian extension of 1772 containing a series of court rooms added by Habershon in 1828.

To the left side of the *cour d'honneur* is the former King's Arms County Hotel of 1795, a severe Georgian building (listed grade II) with "Derby windows" designed by Thomas Freeman to accommodate solicitors, plaintiffs and others with business at the court. And on the opposite side is the Judges' Lodgings of 1811 (grade II), which still contains most of the original Regency furnishings and plate.

All very nice — but very *old*, and the magistrates think they deserve a more comfortable, modern and efficient environment in which to dispense justice. So the county council has applied for planning permission and listed building consent to demolish half the complex of rooms and cells behind the County Hall facade, including the Grand Jury Room; to replace the King's Arms County Hotel by a block of open-plan offices; and to throw out the contents of the Judges' Lodgings and convert the building into offices.

Ostensibly proposed to satisfy the lord chancellor's department, the scheme to wreck these buildings is the brainchild of John Burton, clerk to the justices, abetted by Derby's director of development services, Alan Alldread, who has persuaded the city council that it should go ahead.

Despite the manifest official presumption in favour of the retention of listed buildings, Mr Alldread cheerfully consigns the county hotel to oblivion by arguing that, "the accommodation within it is not capable of economical conversion to meet the detailed requirements of the lord chancellors' department's brief. Moreover the structural condition of the building is poor..." As for the magnificent Grand Jury Room, "while this accommodation is generally structurally sound the question which needs to be addressed is whether or not this accommodation is capable of conversion to magistrates' modern facilities..."



But perhaps it is. No study has been undertaken to see if these most valuable historic buildings can be adapted carefully to remain in legal use. After all, it is not as if money is short for work of this sort. All over Britain, while museums and art galleries are strapped for cash, huge sums of money can always be found to build new courts and police stations. Observers of the future, contemplating the treatment of our cities in the 1970s and 1980s and the vast number of new court buildings (of hideous design) may well draw some interesting conclusions about the nature of our society. And as for the argument that some of the Derby crown court buildings are in poor condition, whose fault is that?

The clerk to the justices hints darkly that, if not given their wicked way with the old crown court, the magistrates will abandon the site and move elsewhere. As the Derby Civic Society — which is vigorously fighting the scheme — puts it: "This is the sort of moral blackmail which lost Derby so many of its much-loved historic buildings in the 1960s. We must not give into it this time; it is time to call their bluff." Quite.

But what if the buildings do go? The Civic Society points out that — when a unitary local authority comes in 18 months' time — the County Hall can be restored and used for special events while many of the courts and cells can be made into a museum of Derby's history: the County Hotel restored as offices and the Judges' Lodging restored as a house and reception suite for the mayor.

After all, if Derby's smug magistrates have no sentiment in favour of keeping some of the city's finest historic buildings, why should anyone feel sentimental about them? Let them move to some purpose-built new courts on the edge of town: it will serve them right.

MORE on The Grange at Ramsgate, the extraordinary home of the great, mad Gothicist A.W.N. Pugin. Now I learn of the foundation of the Pugin Society (122 Grange Road, Ramsgate, CT11 9PT), one of whose aims is to save and restore this remarkable building. I wish it well.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

As discourse concerning sex and sexuality becomes increasingly prevalent among contemporary cultural theorists, the ways in which sexuality is conventionally scripted are being challenged. It is less easy to assume that the field of sex will be perceived uniformly and indiscriminately by all. *Modern Sex* **addresses current sex scholarship through diverse essays that at once call into question traditional approaches and explore new ones...**

Topics include mother-son incest in Japanese popular culture, the "history of the fetishization of the Chinese and the Jewish other" within the Freudian legacy, the encryption of Japanese pornography into Roman script, and issues of gender in Chinese silent films of the 1930s.

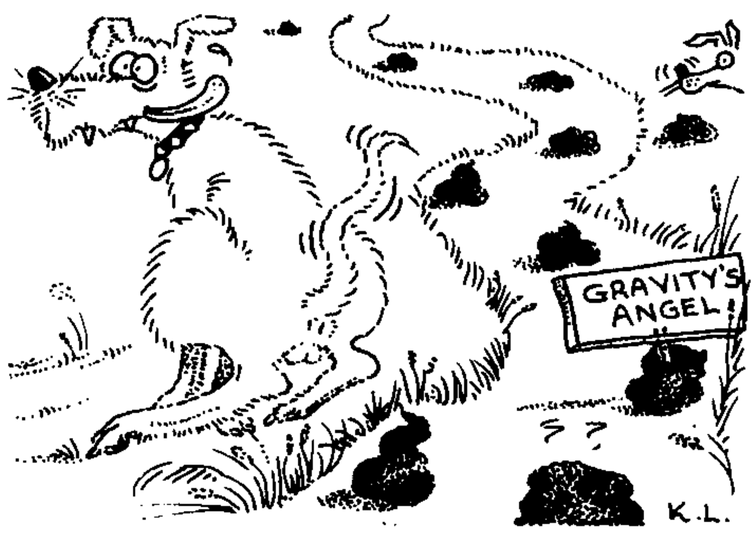
Flyer for Modern Sex
(Duke University Press)

Being thrown out of the US embassy in Ankara with Arthur Miller — a voluntary exile — was one of the proudest moments of my life.

HAROLD PINTER
Guardian

Nicholson Baker, who wrote the cult novel Vox, has his own thoughts on The Scarlet Letter which makes the film version positively friendly to Hawthorne's memory. "I think the real interpretation of The Scarlet Letter — this sounds kind of gimmicky — is that Hawthorne was deeply homosexual and the 'A' stands for anus."

Observer



This is a series of ten bronze mounds, folded and distorted with smooth expanses contrasting the pitted and finger-pinched undersides of each lump. At first ugly and verging on abject, the work quickly establishes a kind of dialogue with the viewer through the intricacy of surface and through each piece's relation to its neighbour, the rest of the pieces and the gallery space.

The mounds were formed by Ortwed lifting as much coarse clay as she could onto a forklift truck, then hurling clay at the ground.

The floor, and the gravity that pulled the clay towards it, are important aspects of Ortwed's current work, in the case of *Random Walk* actually contributing to the final shape of the sculptures. In this way her work can be seen to fit the title of the show (*Gravity's Angel*) which sets up a dichotomy between weight, substance, reality and the insubstantiality of our image of angels.

CHARLOTTE MULLINS
The Times

ALIE/N A(C)TION represents the displacement of corporal, spacial, and cultural subjectivities/economies/communities/fictions, with/into their (grammatical) transliteration and dis-associative antimony. Operative functions of the xenophobic as systemic paradigma (psycho-social bodies) have been iterated into reflexive procedures of "Ent-Fremdung" (to have made strange-ing). This is an inverted alienation, the core of fear, as having made the thing foreign to itself, the host. In our observations and operations we have taken an alien position — incomprehensible and transformative.

WILLIAM FORSYTHE
Programme for Frankfurt Ballet performance of ALIE/N A(C)TION

CULTURED EX LONDON COUPLE stranded in utterly philistine Norfolk village seek similar couples Norwich and southwards, 40-60 plus, for friendship, dinners, intelligent conversation. Box No: I.857.

Independent on Sunday

CONTRIBUTORS: Gnome, A. Non, D. Hughes, J. Croke, M. Carlson, M. Barrett, M. Winnington.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Great Moments In Aviation (BBC2)
The Final Cut (BBC1)
Noel's House Party (BBC1)

ONE of the difficulties of running a channel is turkey management. You know you've got a bummer on your hands but, particularly at the BBC, you can't afford to write it off. It's going to have to be shown. Last weekend Michael Jackson at BBC2 was faced with the most unappetising of all turkeys: turkey à la Winterson.

Great Moments In Aviation, which was slipped out into the night on Saturday with a stocking over its head, is a frightening story of just how badly a commission can go wrong. In 1990 the writer Jeanette Winterson, the director Beeban Kidron and the producer Phillipa Giles found themselves head girls of the BBC drama department. Their serial, *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, adapted by Winterson from her own novel, had just won ratings, raves and international prizes. The trio was asked — and this was long before Jackson was in controller's trousers — what they'd like to do next.

What they wanted to do was a Winterson original film script, *Great Moments In Aviation*, set on a cruise liner from the West Indies to England in the 1950s. There were some doubts about this scenario, but it was decided to give the prize-winners their head. Regrettably, something very funny had happened in the head of Winterson, at least. Even as the TV version of the earlier *Oranges* — fresh, funny, autobiographical — was going out on screen, her novels were moving towards the later style — lumpily lyrical, dottily symbolic, dourly humourless — which was about to make her the joke of the books pages. *Great Moments In Aviation* — where the ship is called the SS (Oh, *God*) Icarus and the characters speak neither English nor West Indian but Wintersonese — was in the later style.

The fascinating thing is that, initially, this didn't matter. Moneymen and actors are largely stupid: they just follow the smell of a recent success. The project was selected to be one of the pioneering BBC films — made on a bigger budget and to be released first on to the cinema circuit — and the cast assembled read: Vanessa Redgrave, John Hurt, Jonathan Pryce and Dorothy Tutin. The film was completed in 1992 and, like a kind of literary Victor Kiam, Winterson liked it so much that she named her company after it. Her royalties and earnings have, for the last four years, been paid to Great Moments Ltd.

The film, however, disappeared. Distributors who viewed it decided it would not, after all, be released in cinemas. And, although Winterson has proudly listed it as one of her achievements on dust-jackets and reference books since 1992, it took three years even to reach TV.

With a clever piece of turkey management Jackson scheduled it for the week of the British release of Beeban Kidron's rather better first Hollywood movie, *To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Numarr*, in the hope of picking up on some passing publicity. Nothing, though, could save it from a critical mauling and the project stands as a warning that artists are at their most dangerous immediately after a big success and that, sometimes, being a controller is about emptying bed-pans as discreetly as possible.

Yet, if it's any consolation to Jackson, **The Final Cut** and **Noel's House Party**, over on BBC1, demonstrate, conversely, that dealing with big successes can be as tricky for a controller as coping with failures of commissioning.

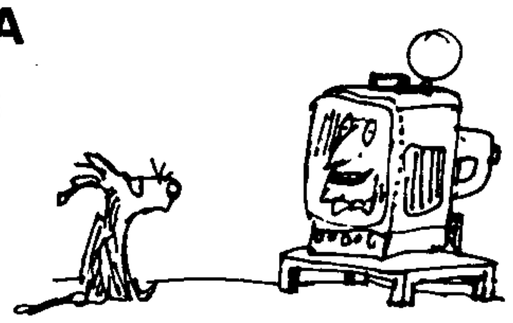
To the alarm of the BBC, *Noel's House Party*, its Saturday night banker for the last few years, seemed to be suffering a worrying audience haemorrhage at the start of the new series. This looks like proof of one of the rules of television formats, which is that shows based around surprise or shock have a limited screen-life, at least at the peak of their ratings appeal. *The Young Ones*, *Tiswas* and *The Big Breakfast* are good examples of this: series which shattered the traditions of the form in which they worked but which soon became as rigidly bound by their non-conventions as the series they despised were bound by their conventions.

With *Noel's House Party* there was a genuine thrill in the early years of the "NTV" segment in which viewers in their sitting rooms would suddenly find their television set was watching them or in "Gotcha", where a celebrity would be tricked into participating in some kind of prank happening. The format was so diverting that it didn't matter for quite a while that most of those ambushed on their sofas were gormless dorks or that virtually every Gotcha set-up involved a low-rent celeb hired to host a brainless television show. By now, though, the content matters and it looks as if Noelly is going to have to come up with some new segments fast.

The Final Cut, the last part of the Urquhart trilogy on BBC1, makes the same point. In the first series there was a real spark of excitement when Ian Richardson caught the eye of the viewer and summoned us closer for a hugger-mugger aside. Shakespearean soliloquy, you thought. Dislocation of the frame, you thought. Now, in the third series, he just looks like he's reading the weather. Sometimes, viewers wonder why so much new television looks like so much old television. It's because imitation will always be a longer meal-ticket than innovation.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS



BRIAN "Hopscotch" Mawhinney, the chairman of the Conservative party who calls himself "doctor" whenever he talks on matters medical, has targeted the BBC's "drift to the left" as his main propaganda area. Hence his incredible attack on *Casualty* (watch out, *EastEnders*).

The *Eye* is keen to help Dr Hopscotch and so is monitoring the subversive appointments which are plunging the formerly reliable Beeb into the hands of the reds. Recent "left-wing" job decisions include:

Adrian White (see last *Eye*), arch-Thatcherite water king, to the board of governors.

Nick Robinson, youthful former chair of ultra-right Federation of Conservative Students, seconded from *Panorama* for a stint as political correspondent in the run-up to the general election.

Michael Gove, author of the odiously sycophantic hagiography of foreigner-basher Michael Portillo, to be another special political correspondent. Watch this space for more non-left wingery.

IS the BBC getting its money's worth from *This Is Your Life*?

Alan Yentob bought the Thames TV show back to the Beeb with the promise that the new version would be less showbizzy and would feature more new names and unknowns.

Living up to the promise the first subject was the completely unknown Mr Showbiz himself, Andrew Lloyd-Webber, who, to top it all, had already featured on the show when it was on ITV.

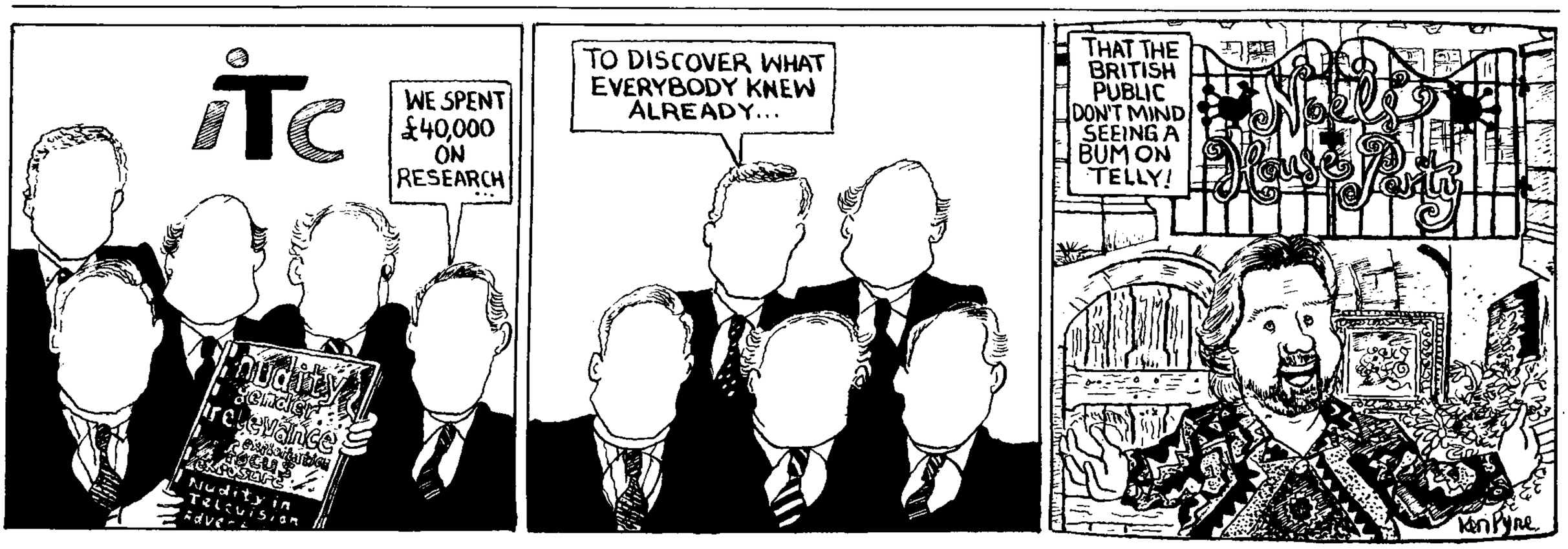
Secondhand subjects continued to appear and made up a third of the so-called "celebrities" in the series. Eight "celebs", including Leslie Crowther, Marti Caine and Peter Ustinov, were "surprised" by the reappearance of Michael Aspel clasping the famous red book. Now the second series has begun and three of the first nine guests are having a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the second time.

Of course the programme's ratings have fallen.

UNDERNEATH the Birtspeak of a convoluted memo to BBC set designers at Television Centre recently, a clear message rings out: loads more jobs must go.

Bob Brown, manager of "Design Resources", says in the memo that those who do not volunteer for redundancy will have to complete a "self-assessment" form. "Through an objective and analytical process of evaluating the Designer's role we have produced a detailed person specification," burbles the memo incomprehensibly.

Those designers who will keep their posts will be those who have been able to demonstrate such obvious design skills as, er, "selling", "financial management" and — most worrying of all — "loyalty to the department".


ITC
WE SPENT £40,000 ON RESEARCH...
Nudity under relevance
Nudity in Television
TO DISCOVER WHAT EVERYBODY KNEW ALREADY...
THAT THE BRITISH PUBLIC DON'T MIND SEEING A BUM ON TELLY!
Noel's House Party
Ken Pyne

I-BSkyB

The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Bob Dale

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

WORLD OF SPIN DOCTORS

THERE was incredulity last week when it was suggested that David Burnside might succeed Hugh Colver as communications director for the Conservative party. In fact Burnside has all the qualities needed for the job:

Proven political effectiveness: In the 1970s Burnside was made press officer for William Craig's Vanguard party, an extreme unionist outfit in Northern Ireland. The party withered and died shortly afterwards.

An ability to gloss over facts: In the 1980s, when Burnside was public affairs director of British Airways, the airline's computer was found to have "lost" 94 Rolls-Royce jet engines and 400,000 other spare parts worth £135 million, which was 45 per cent of the airline's total stock at privatisation.

Burnside's department put out the story of an enormous crime, which broke on the front page of the *Times* on 19 December 1989. Under the headline BIG FRAUD IN JET PARTS UNCOVERED AT HEATHROW, the paper quoted unnamed "airline executives" saying there had been a worldwide conspiracy to steal from BA.

Two BA employees were later found to have stolen two of the jet engines, worth £250,000. However, the 92 other engines and 400,000 spare parts had not been stolen at all, but sold or "scrapped" off balance-sheet by BA after privatisation.

This vital fact emerged only after BA offered a list of the missing 94 engines in the second of three Old Bailey trials. By then two innocent directors of Wingspares Ltd at Burgess Hill, Sussex, had been arrested for stealing four of the Spey engines and had seen their engineering firm bankrupted. They later walked from court, free but ruined, after proving that Rolls-Royce had scrapped the engines on the orders of BA itself. Altogether 11 innocent people stood in the dock in three Old Bailey trials before Burnside's fable of a global conspiracy against BA could be exposed.

Experience of dirty tricks: Burnside eventually resigned from BA after the airline admitted that he had hired Brian Basham's Broad Street PR to plant "hostile and discreditable" stories about Richard Branson and Virgin. In their days at BA, Burnside and Basham were fondly known as the Kneecapper and the Streetfighter.

Squeaky-clean past: In 1994, after losing his BA job, he turned up at a shooting party at media tycoon Owen Oyston's baronial castle, Claughton Hall. At 7 o'clock the next morning he was found asleep in his car with the engine running: Burnside, described in court merely as "a businessman from Northern Ireland", was banned from driving for three years after Lancaster magistrates heard that his intoximeter reading was three times over the legal limit.

Absolute discretion: "It took several minutes to wake Burnside," PC Nigel Ralphson testified during last year's drink-drive case. "He kept putting his fingers to his lips and going 'shhh'."

Clearly he is just the man to help the Tories win the next election.

HACKWATCH: TAKI

FIRST, the good news: Taki, millionaire playboy and sometime cocaine smuggler, will shortly give up writing "Atticus" in the *Sunday Times*. Now for the bad news: he has been lured away by Dominic Lawson to write for the *Sunday Telegraph* instead.

In his younger days Taki represented Greece at both karate and tennis. Today, however, he prefers to concentrate on less strenuous sports such as social-climbing and name-dropping. To whet the appetite of *Sunday Telegraph* readers, here are a few highlights from his recent Atticus columns...

6 August: "Four days ago I drive to Charlton Park, Wiltshire, where the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire has his country seat. Mickey and Linda Suffolk, their young daughters Philippa and Natasha, and yours truly then got into his Piper Aztec aircraft and took off for Gstaad from his front lawn."

13 August: The actor Richard Harris is having a public spat with Michael Caine. "I used to hang around with Damian Harris, the actor's son, who is a director in Hollywood," Taki boasts. He also knows Richard Harris's ex-wife Elizabeth, who is "very attractive and intelligent". Oh, and "another of his wives, the American Ann Turkel, used to be quite a good friend back in the 1960s. She was a great beauty and we all sort of salivated around her." Then, however, "something happened that stopped me salivating": she revealed her father was "in textiles". How vulgar; and how wise of Taki not to remind us that his own father used to own a textile mill in Khartoum.

27 August: Taki is a great admirer of King Hussein of Jordan, who has given sanctuary to two of Saddam Hussein's daughters. But he has a distressing confession to make: "Although I'm a friend of Princess Ferial, his sister-in-law, I've never met him."

3 September: The Countess of Waldegrave claims that her husband threatened to kill her. "I happen to know Lord and Lady Waldegrave, she better than he. They are both extremely nice..." Taki also informs us that he would agree with Sir James Goldsmith's campaign for a Euro-referendum "even if I weren't an old friend, which I am." Finally, he is delighted to see that Beaufort Castle has been sold to Ann Gloag. True, she isn't as grand as we might wish — "daughter of a bus conductor" — but she is stinking rich, having created the Stagecoach empire. "This is what capitalism is all about," he drools. "Not marrying into money, not grabbing it by using the power of the state, but by making it all on your own." Presumably he has forgotten that his own fortune was entirely inherited from his dad.

10 September: Jean Kennedy Smith, President Clinton's ambassador to Ireland, is in the news. "Smith is the nicest of the Kennedy brood, a soft-spoken woman I first met 30 years ago. She and her sister Pat Lawford came to Paris for Porfirio Rubirosa's funeral, and I saw a lot of her and her husband Steve Smith later on in New York and Palm Beach."

17 September: Sally Croker-Poole, the ex-wife of the Aga Khan, is selling her jewels at Christie's. "I have known Sally since before her meteoric rise," Taki discloses. He also knows Sally's best friend, Ines Franck, "who comes from one of Switzerland's finest families... Ines and I have been thick as thieves for 25 years." He then turns to the other important issue of the moment — an attempt by Canterbury council to stop John Aspinall's keepers from going into the tiger enclosures at Howlett's zoo. "I find it outrageous that a bunch of suits can tell a man, who has done so much for wildlife and animals, what to do with his own life," he fumes. "I know Aspinall well..."

1 October: "I do not buy a word of the latest Diana flap. This Will Carling business seems to me a set-up by people who benefit from the ensuing publicity." And he should know: "I have met Diana three times."

15 October: An extravagant plug for Planet Organic, a new London shop. "Daily deliveries from organic farms will ensure the widest range of organic fruit, vegetables, meats and poultry." Why the enthusiasm? Simple: Planet Organic is run by Joe Dwek, "the son of an old buddy". Meanwhile Taki has been to the memorial service for another old buddy, Lord White. Afterwards "John Aspinall, Jimmy Goldsmith and I dined together and spoke of friends dropping like flies". Alarming news indeed: without his famous chums, what will the poor little rich boy have to write about?

22 October: The tabloids are agog at the news that Charles and Camilla attended a party at the Ritz this week. Taki generously offers us his expert opinion: "I met and dined with Camilla Parker-Bowles for the first time this year, although I have been an old friend of her brother. She could not have been nicer. Ironically I also met the Prince of Wales for the first time, at the Greek royal wedding... I found him very nice."

29 October: "Two nights ago, I went to a fabulous ball in New York. It was given by Robert Miller, the Hong Kong-based billionaire, for his third — and last — daughter's wedding to Alexander von Furstenberg, son of Egon and Diane, the dress designer." And what a party it was: "It started with fireworks — straight out of *Götterdämmerung*. With Wagner blasting, they came over the water like Stukas, or Messerschmitts. We had dinner in an impossibly grand tent decorated in a Chinese style, with the great Lester Lanin orchestra." Taki concludes, without a hint of irony, that Miller "is the most unassuming truly rich man I know".

5 November: Taki offers us "the inside story" on Maya Flick's divorce case, which has been making headlines. "Maya is a distant cousin of the mother of my children, and I have been known to visit various restaurants and clubs with her. Mick Flick, her former husband, I have known, not well, for at least 25 years." Fascinating!

12 November: "Atticus has not always been kind about Hollywood and the people who make their living there. Now I know that not everybody there is uncouth, greedy and a lowlife. That is because I met and dined with Goldie Hawn, as nice a lady — and as normal — as one can hope to meet." Talking of the silver screen, Taki offers us another of his fascinating vignettes about the famous: "The article in last week's *Sunday Times* about the new James Bond flick, *Goldeneye*, brought back memories. I used to play chemin de fer regularly with Cubby Broccoli, who despite his plebeian name was..." Was what? Yup, you guessed it: "...a hell of a nice fellow." Finally Taki lambasts Neil Kinnock, who is threatening to tax frequent-flyer schemes. "Here," he thunders, "is a man who has never held a proper job except that of a demagogue." Worse still, the former Labour leader enjoys a "sybaritic" lifestyle. Still, at least he isn't a coke-snorting millionaire layabout...

MYSTIC MOGG'S CRYSTAL BALLS-UPS

"COLIN Powell is a black Eisenhower; like Eisenhower in 1951, he will defer announcing his candidature for the presidency until his chosen moment; like Eisenhower, he will win the Republican nomination, defeating an experienced senator previously regarded as the party leader; like Eisenhower, he will be elected by a large majority in November 1996, defeating a weakened Democratic Administration, and, God willing, will be reelected by an even larger majority in the year 2000."

— William Rees-Mogg, The Times, 11 September 1995.

DOING THE ROUNDS

FOCUS ON BARTS (AGAIN)

THE "save Barts hospital and medical school" campaign continues, with protesters pinning their hopes on a judicial review of Virginia Bottomley's lamentable decision that it will close on 22 January 1996.

Barts' problems date back to 1991 when Sir William Staveley, ex-head of the admiralty, took control of the **London hospital**, with which Barts has been forced to merge. In 1992 Sir William became chair of **North East Thames RHA**, extending his influence to Barts, which unlike the London was refused trust status. Quite why this should be so, in a hospital that has some of the best doctors and the highest tech £70 million theatres and day surgery unit in Europe is unclear. The fairest option, of allowing Barts and the London to tout for business independently in a free market, was never truly considered.

A fatal shot in the foot occurred in 1993 when a group of Barts consultants agreed with then health minister Brian Mawhinney that Barts casualty department could close in return for the safety of its specialist units. This may well prove disastrous since, without the free access of the hospital to the community it serves through casualty, public support will eventually dwindle. Without public support, the department of health can renege on its commitments at will. This was swiftly illustrated when Professor Mike Besser, retiring chief executive, tried to retrieve the situation by agreeing to a merger with the London on condition that the two hospitals went in as equal partners. Shortly after it was announced that the new **Royal London Hospitals Trust** would relocate to a single site in Whitechapel (*Eye* 868).

The unseemly haste with which closure is being rushed through has not been fully explained. Sir Derek Boorman, ex-SAS and military intelligence in Hong Kong, took over as head of RLHT in April 94 and tactfully announced Barts closure in a letter to the *Times*. He manages to combine the post with directorships in Tarmac and Crown House Engineering, though would surely declare this if either company were to benefit from the building of the new hospital. He is, however, eager to sell off the Barts site, especially since an Arab consortium has purchased the post office land next to it.

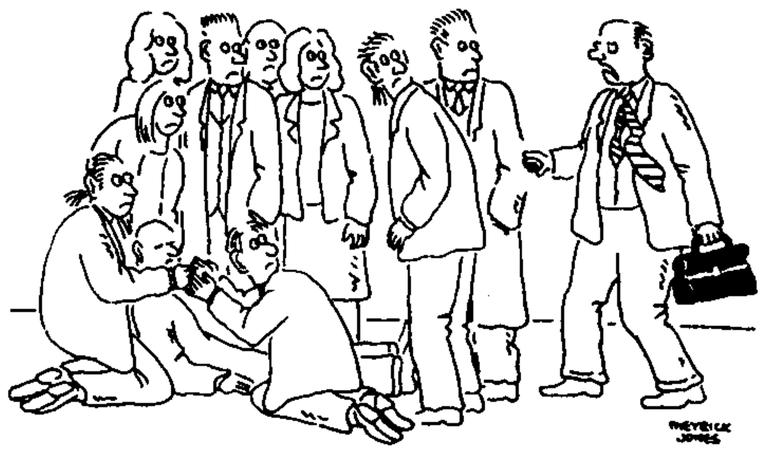
Less clear is the role of a Mr Stopes-Row, the civil servant who helped Tomlinson draw up his now discredited report. He subsequently prepared briefing papers for a meeting of **East London and City health authority** containing gross misrepresentations of an independent report on the future of Barts by York university (*Eye* 868), which in fact found the case for a single site option unconvincing. Ironically or not, Stopes-Row now resides as a quality assessor at the district health authority overseeing Barts.

Morale at the hospital is rock bottom, with consultants forced into signing gagging contracts. But the spirit of rebellion is alive in the orthopaedic department, where five of the seven world-renowned consultants have refused to work at the London. This may not be enough to save the hospital against a concerted and well-planned attempt to destroy it, but at least public support is holding up, with 88 percent still opposed to the closure.

● THELMA HOLLAND, chief executive of the financially challenged **Nottingham city hospital trust**, has taken a firm stand on the campus security staff, reducing them in number from 12 to seven. The effect was almost immediate; her car was stolen from outside her office window.

● THE latest cost-cutting measure at the capital's **University College hospital trust** (incorporating the buildings formerly known as **Middlesex hospital**) is to do away with cooks and introduce cook-chill catering. This has upset the cooks, who have a choice between the sack or downgrading to meal-warmers, but pleased director of facilities Henry Stanley, who on £35,000 a year is unlikely to include the reheated year-old food among his perks.

● **HILLINGDON hospital trust** has farmed out its cleaning services to a private contractor, the Pall Mall Group (part of the Godfrey Davis care hire empire), who have introduced their own minimum wage of £2.70 an hour. This has not impressed the trust's 53 cleaners who were previously on a tempting £3.20 an hour.



"Quick, let me through! I'm a Primary Health Care Provider"

● THE truth on the premature demise of the all new £40 million **Solihull hospital** (*Eyes passim*) has emerged. While every other new hospital in the country is generally given a primer to cover its capital costs, or at the very least a manageable loan over 30 years, **West Midlands regional health authority** decided to pull the plug on Solihull, leaving it with a £6 million debt before it even opened for business and from which it has never recovered. As local GP Dr Arturo Lupoli put it: "Its a bloody disgrace. What should have been an excellent and comprehensive service has been relegated to the level of a cottage hospital."

● SUZANNE COLLINGE, chief executive of **Worthing Priority Care NHS trust**, has received a 22 percent rise in her £50,000 salary which is, according to chair Nicola Saunders, "to retain such high calibre staff". Ms Collinge's calibre is well known to former finance director John Parker, who claimed at an industrial tribunal that Ms Collinge threatened to knee-cap him before subsequently dismissing him for failing to meet his objectives. The trust settled out of court, with Mr Parker allegedly walking away with £87,000 of taxpayers' money.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

THAT agriculture minister Douglas "Piggy" Hogg should have called in meat industry representatives last week to give them a "rocket" for leaving spinal cords in a very small number of beef carcases beggars belief. That he should now threaten to prosecute slaughterhouse owners to cover embarrassment at the continuing epidemic of BSE, is inexcusable.

Since April this year his darling Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) has allegedly been responsible for inspecting every carcase before it leaves any slaughterhouse. More than 1,000 inspectors stamp these carcases with a "health mark" certifying that they are safe for human consumption, extorting more than £50 million a year from the industry for this "service".

On the authority of two high court judges, lords justice Gibson and Smith, in a case last year on the sale of unfit meat from a slaughterhouse, the meat men are entitled to rely on these inspectors to ensure that only fit meat is sold. If there is anyone who should be in the frame, therefore, it is Mr Johnston McNeil, head of the Meat Hygiene Service, whose men have so lamentably failed to do their duty.

But if the focus is on spinal cords — which are claimed to be able to carry the "BSE agent" — this has diverted attention from the growing lack of credibility of the Maffia's explanation for the BSE epidemic. With more than 20,000 BSE cattle having now been born after the 1988 "infected feed" ban, the ministry is at an increasing loss as to explain why the epidemic is continuing.

AND while the media go into the usual feeding frenzy at the mention of BSE, the proverbial deafening silence greeted publication of the agriculture select committee report on the pesticide safety and the veterinary medicines directorates. Yet in many ways the report was a landmark event. The committee has recognised that the current situation where the VMD both licenses dangerous chemicals and then monitors and investigates suspected adverse reactions in humans is unacceptable.

With due credit to Sir Jerry Wiggin, committee chair, the "Wigginettes" clearly agree that the public cannot have confidence in a system where the same boffins who clear substances like organophosphorous sheep dips for safety then have to report on whether their own decisions were sound.

But less creditably the committee failed to criticise with any vigour the extraordinary delay in mounting a thorough investigation of the growing toll of ill-health arising from OP sheep dip use. Compare and contrast the report of the defence committee, not a week later, which complained of the MoD's four-year delay in mounting an epidemiological investigation of "Gulf war syndrome". It wrote: "The MoD has been quick to deny but slow to investigate."

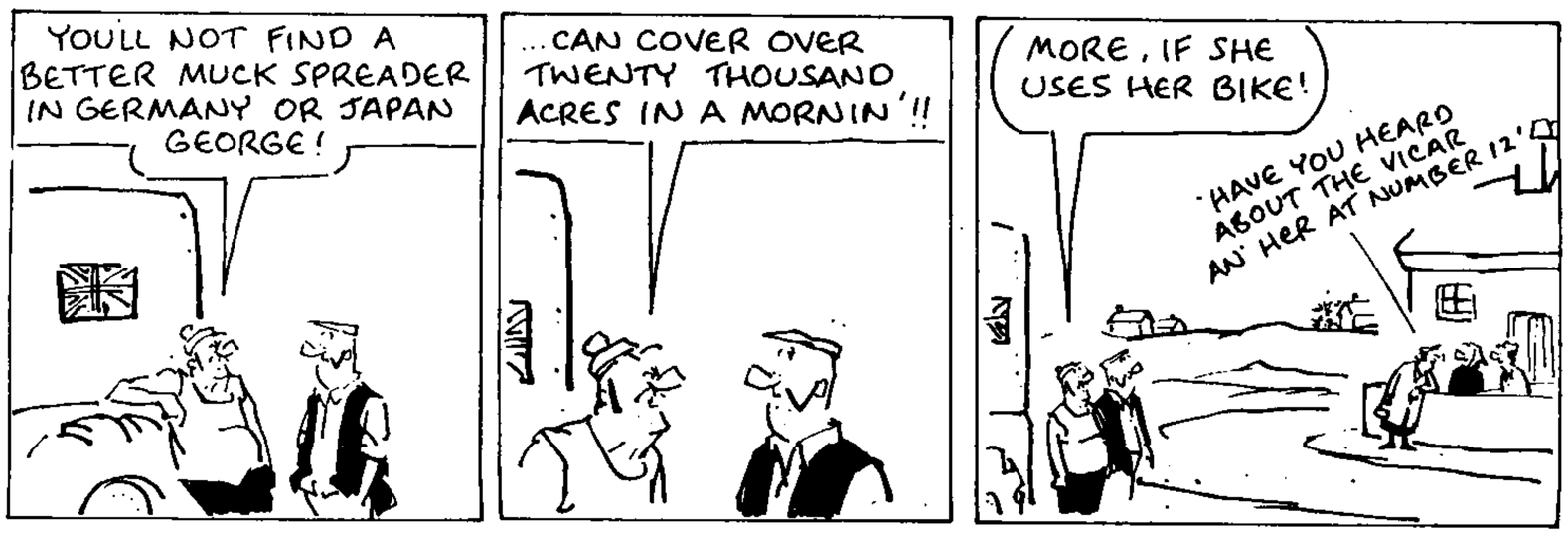
Yet, although OP sheep-dip poisoning has been known to the VMD for more than 10 years, only now has the fair Angela Browning, junior agriculture minister, launched an epidemiological investigation.

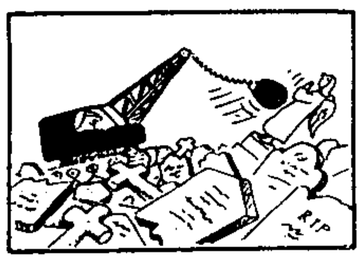
HOWEVER, while OP victims continue to suffer hope is at hand for the 80 or so slaughterhouses scheduled to close at the end of the year because they have failed to meet the ludicrous requirements of the Maffia, interpreting the EC fresh meat directive 91/497/EEC. It seems she has finally latched on to the fact that her officials have been "gold-plating" the standard, blackmailing abattoir owners into carrying out hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of works that are entirely unnecessary.

Now she has decided that the Maffia will not be allowed to require any works not specifically included in the directive. As to the proposed amendment to the meat hygiene regulations, which would force pig slaughterhouses to have a five-metre separation between their processes (*Eye* 885), this has now been abandoned.

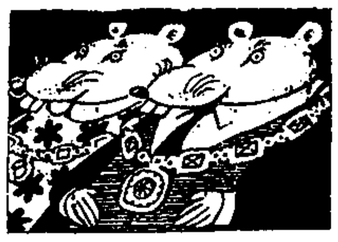
'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald


ALBERT
YOU'LL NOT FIND A BETTER MUCK SPREADER IN GERMANY OR JAPAN GEORGE!
...CAN COVER OVER TWENTY THOUSAND ACRES IN A MORNIN'!!
MORE, IF SHE USES HER BIKE!
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE VICAR AN' HER AT NUMBER 12'



Rotten Borough Advertiser



ANOTHER HACKNEY DOWNER

THE WHEEL of fortune has turned full circle in Hackney where Bernard Crofton has been reinstated as housing director after being wrongly accused of "racism". His most vociferous critic, personnel chief Sam Yeboah, has now been suspended.

Yeboah, who styles himself as Hackney's most senior African employee, was unhappy with the council's decision to reinstate the much maligned Crofton. When Yeboah saw Crofton back at his desk he became rather emotional, rushed off to the *Local Government Chronicle* and blurted out a list of dramatic accusations against the council: that it was racist; that various councillors, including West Indian Hettie Peters, were racist; and that Crofton, himself just cleared of racism, was, er, racist.

The careful *Chronicle* then faxed Yeboah's allegations back to him for checking. Unfortunately it sent the fax to chief executive Tony Elliston's office by mistake. Approaching the press without permission is against Hackney personnel's code of conduct, so Elliston had to suspend Yeboah.

Meanwhile the knives are out for the councillors who supported the beleaguered Crofton, especially Hettie Peters, the West Indian member of Crofton's appeal panel who voted for the housing boss. On the morning of the recent council meeting at which Crofton's future was discussed, an anonymous list of fabricated complaints against Peters involving false housing benefit claims was circulated to all councillors in an attempt to smear the innocent and respected member.

More sinister was the ruling Labour group's approach to Hackney's Jewish councillors, telling them that if they voted for Crofton they would be unlikely to receive funding for Jewish nurseries in the Stamford Hill area.

Hackney's black and Jewish councillors were unperturbed and voted 31-18 in favour of Crofton's reinstatement, much to the chagrin of new chief executive Elliston who had previously summoned Labour leaders to his office to enlist support for his plan to offer Crofton a miserly £10,000 golden handshake and then sack him if he refused. The plan came apart when Hackney's barrister, Alan Moses QC, warned that Crofton had won his appeal legally and that any attempt to pay him off would be liable to surcharge.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

MANCHESTER — owner of the most polluted city centre in Britain — has launched a campaign, backed by its tourist board, to get people out of their cars and on to public transport. The message has yet to reach tourism chief executive Liz Jeffreys and her assistant Roz Hughes. Both drive to work in their company cars from city centre *pieds-à-terre* in Castlefield to tourism offices 800 yards away in city centre Oxford Street.

HOMES FOR BOTES SCANDAL

THE Labour-misrun council in Lambeth is in a mess over its relationship with its one-time biggest building contractor, Botes Ltd.

Lambeth sacked Botes two years ago after accusing the company of bribing two town hall officials. Botes duly downed tools, leaving rubbish strewn around the borough, paving stones dug up, repairs undone and hundreds of people without heating. Though Lambeth won permission from the courts to raid Botes's headquarters and seize company documents, it has been unable to find any proof of bribery or corruption. But it has learnt that Botes was massively overcharging for very poor workmanship on three estates.

On the Loughborough estate, for example, the contract with Botes was for £200,000. The firm eventually submitted a bill for £293,000, but the work was so shabbily done that in one flat the wall behind a ventilation grille had been painted black to make it appear as if a hole had been made. And at fire-damaged 38 Guildford Road in Stockwell, where Lambeth had forgotten to get listed building permission before sending workmen in, Botes invoiced for £350,000 — £100,000 above the original contract price.

The high court has ruled that the company was overcharging and "quite ruthless in its pursuit of profit". Botes is now countersuing for £6 million worth of work it claims it has done but not been paid for. So far the only winners are the lawyers, whose bill is around £1 million and rising — not bad in a borough that is millions of pounds in debt over uncollected poll tax, council tax, business rates, etc, etc.

SUNNY JIM MAKES CRIME PAY

WITH all eyes on the fire strike, the fact that Merseyside police authority (MPA) is facing a £5 million shortfall this year has been largely overlooked.

Last month Murkeyside was carpeted by the chief inspector of police Trefor Morris for not solving enough violent crimes; and the audit commission isn't convinced that the most expensive county constabulary in the land is offering "value for money". Nor are members of the public encouraged by the sight of more coppers on the beat. There aren't any because recruitment has been frozen.

However, chief constable "Sunny" Jim Sharples has managed to persuade the MPA that because his patch is so difficult to police he and his four assistant chief constables (ACCs) need tremendously big pay rises. Sharples takes a modest 10 percent (or £6,200), but deputy Paul "Ball" Acres and three other ACCs get a more robust 25 percent rise bringing their pay to £62,500 a year.

When MPA members worried this might not go down well with the plods who must make do with 3 percent, chairwoman Carol Gustafson came up with a novel solution: she forbade her fellow MPA members from mentioning the pay review to the media.

PS: The police have not nicked anyone for the Ungi murder (see *Eyes passim*), despite more "sprays jobs" (one of Ungi's brothers had his house riddled with bullets on Halloween). Coincidentally the house is on the same street as the police training centre, which was recently refurbished at great cost to the taxpayer. Senior staff not only live there in executive suites completely free of charge, but the training centre has become legendary for studies into Ugandan police practices.

IN BRIEF

BENT: The *Eye* has uncovered an outrageously blatant piece of gerrymandering in Britain's barmiest borough, where two years ago the Tory-controlled council told tenants in marginal Wembley that their homes had been "programmed" for repairs and redecoration by the ever-generous town hall. By an amazing coincidence the letters went out only a few weeks before the council elections, which the Tories won. Then, by an even more amazing coincidence, the renovation scheme was scrapped. The district auditor has now stepped in, wanting to know why the £7,500 cost of processing the housing department computer to deal with the offer came out of council funds and not those of the Tory party.

TOWER HAMLETS: Labour councillor Rajan Jalal, who wants to replace Peter Shore as MP in the new Bethnal Green and Bow seat, has spent a night *chez* Knacker after a ruck outside a boozer in Whitechapel in which two men had their heads kicked in. He says he was victimised for being a councillor and was inside as a "political prisoner". He sounds just right for "new" Labour: as vice-principal of Tower Hamlets College he threatened staff with disciplinary action for voting to take part in a one-hour lunchtime protest over job cuts.

ASHFORD: The Tory council astonished voters with its choice of a new economic development officer: 63 British applicants for the £31,000 a year post were rejected for Romanian engineer Mihai Ciubotaru from Brasov, Transylvania. He speaks five languages but has little free enterprise experience because that was banned under Ceausescu. After three weeks' work experience in Ashford he knows all about democracy.

HOUNSLOW: The Labour council spent £7,000 finding out what the Asian community thinks about parks. The astounding news — that Asians likes parks with flowers, good playgrounds and clean toilets and without wild, defecating dogs — took 40 hours of observation in three parks, four specialist discussion groups and the involvement of 17

BIRTSPEAK has been extended to cover Management Drivel in *all* spheres (not just the BBC). *£10 paid for examples.*

By his criticism of 'inspirational babble', my colleague Geoff Ryall-Harvey exhibits a lack of awareness of the need for integrated management options, without which total organisational flexibility is incompatible with balanced political contingency. With systematised monitored capability, the responsive logistical concept will achieve the parallel, reciprocal management capability to develop a realistic management structure in the NHS.

For the appropriate fee, I am willing to share, disseminate and explore further possibilities on either side of the Atlantic.

Edward Ashley: Letter to Health Service Journal

Out now — **"Son of Yobs"** — the book. £3.99

Letters

Letter of the Week

Sir,

I read with interest your "Beak of the Week" piece in PRIVATE EYE *884. You were absolutely right to highlight this case and the fact that it was one of our staff who helped to resolve the matter by referring it to Richard Wise.*

I do not know where you got the weekly cost figure of £2,000. The net operating costs for Risley per prisoner per year is just under £20,000. That works out at less than £400 per week.

I was sorry to see you using the old "Grisly Risley" tag. The former remand centre was turned into a prison in 1990 and we have had some encouraging evidence of real improvement. The GUARDIAN *included us in the best 10 prisons in the country and the chief inspector of prisons in his latest report published in April 1995 wrote "the ethos of Risley has been transformed from the negative 'Grisly Risley' image of the 1980s to one of a positive and innovative prison where staff and prisoners are encouraged to develop and participate in constructive programmes". It is the improved ethos and culture at Risley that encourages staff to act positively as happened in the case you quoted.*

Yours sincerely,
BRENDAN O'FRIEL,
Governor, HMP Risley.

Block aid

Sir,

We write to clarify a few facts relevant to your article of 3 November 1995 referring to Belfairs Community College Science Block.

Derek Latham and David Smith were appointed by the school governors after two interviews in February 1994 in competition with other consultants to prepare detailed designs.

Before their appointment the money for the project had been allocated in principle to the school and announced publicly by the department for education.

At no time was Pauline Latham's membership of the Funding Agency for Schools an issue in the appointment or of any benefit to the school.

As you record Pauline Latham was not party to any decisions regarding allocation of funds to the school or to any other school who submitted a bid for a capital allocation.

The Funding Agency maintains a register of board members' interests which has always been available for scrutiny by any member of the public.

Yours faithfully,
DEREK & PAULINE LATHAM,
Little Eaton, Derby.

Truly appalling

Sir,

Your treatment of Ms Yates on your TV show was beyond the pale. When a lady of such standing agrees to appear on a serious and informative programme such as this is it not incumbent on you to treat her with the appropriate courtesies, rather than making cheap jokes at her expense?

No doubt she had been fooled into appearing having seen your previous courteous treatment of such luminaries as Mr Chaterjee and Sir Rhoodie Boyson. What a shock it must have been for the poor thing.

You are lucky she doesn't sue the shirt off your back. In fact, as an act of contrition I think you should publish a picture of yourself without a shirt on, or else of another man similarly attired, perhaps even also showing an attractive young lady to whom the man may be apologising, using an appropriately fond gesture. If you have one. Which I doubt.

Yours,
STEVE EVANS,
Sherborne, Dorset.

Hole sale

Sir,

May I be one of several hundred pedants to point out that Will Self (Pseuds' Corner, 884) has totally buggered up the Platonic simile of the Cave? The Forms are not "carried past the mouth of the cave". They **are** *outside the cave but they constitute the "real", knowable, permanent world, basking in the glorious light of the Sun (ie, the Form of the Good; sorry this sounds a bit Fotherington-Thomas: it's not like that in the original). Self has confused the Forms with the artificial images carried in front of a fire down in the Cave, so as to cast shadows on a wall, for the entertainment of the inhabitants (like Sky, I guess, except it's free).*

Yours philosophically,
CATHERINE ATHERTON,
Oxford.

Nasty regalia

Sir,

Reference last week's HP Sauce on my selection as the Conservative candidate in Chesterfield: your misinformed correspondent does you a disservice.

Not content with getting my residence and hobby wrong, I have neither owned a collection of Nazi regalia. Far from being "jolly", I find the extremist innuendo of this statement grossly offensive.

Regarding my acquaintance with Dr Mawhinney, it is not unknown for candidates to have met the party chairman. Can I therefore take it that this correspondence makes us close friends?

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN POTTER,
Swayfield, Lincolnshire.
cc. Rt Hon Dr Brian Mawhinney MP.

Tory party pooper

Sir,

I was amazed to read in your organ that someone by the name of Martin Potter has been selected by the Tories to fight Tony Benn in Chesterfield. Can this be the same Martin Potter who a few years ago attended a fancy dress disco at Nottingham sporting a steel helmet and gas mask?

Trainspotter must have had a premonition of the party's impromptu highlight — a spectacular bare-arsed farting display by one of his Tory pals. It was the best speech I ever heard a Tory make and it received an enormous standing ovation from all present.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN TAYLOR,
London W7.

Curtain call

Sir,

Whatever Sherry Morley may or may not have done the sight of a critic dormant at a performance is nothing new.

The late Evan Senior, a music critic, was once dozing through CARMEN *at Covent Garden when it came to a point in the score with a loud and sustained ringing on the triangle. It sounded rather like a (now, sadly, old fashioned) telephone bell and he arose from his slumbers and was heard to give his number as if answering the phone.*

Yours faithfully,
RODNEY M. BENNETT,
Richmond, Surrey.

Lookalike

Chancellor

Old fraud

Sir,

Surely I'm not the only one to notice the uncanny resemblance between the turn-of-the-century-fraudulent-founder-of-the-thoroughly-discredited-pseudo-science-of-"theosophy", Madam Blavatsky, and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke MP.

Other, more than superficial, similarities suggest they must certainly be related.

Yours faithfully,
MICK RYAN,
Bournemouth, Dorset.

The Lottery Winners

TURNER

..SO THAT'S TWO ESCORTS, THREE ROVERS, TWO BMW's, ONE PORSCHE, FOUR JAGUARS, TWO VOLVOS AND THE ROLLS ROYCE - THAT'S £372,691·07.
SHOWROOM
CHEERS! AND HAVE ONE FOR YOURSELF.

I-SPY

Submitted by S. Tumy. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Para medic

Sir,

That methionine is "disgusting and dangerous" as claimed by Dr Brandon of the Paracetamol Information Centre (or is it the Paracetamol "Disinformation" Centre?); surely a medical doctor would know that methionine is an essential amino acid found naturally in bread, fish, meat, etc? In fact 30 EC grammes of beef (about one and a fifth British ounce) contains 200mgs of methionine and many people eat more than 120g of meat daily without apparently suffering the problems publicised by Dr Brandon.

Yours faithfully,
CRAIG D. BURRELL, MD, ChB,
Newport, Wales.

Seeing double

Sir,

Has anyone else noticed the resemblance between many items broadcast during RORY BREMNER — WHO ELSE? *and* PRIVATE EYE *of c. three weeks/three months earlier (eg sheep dips!) Are they related? I think we should be told.*

Yours faithfully,
ADAM GURNEY,
London SW14.

For Pete's sake

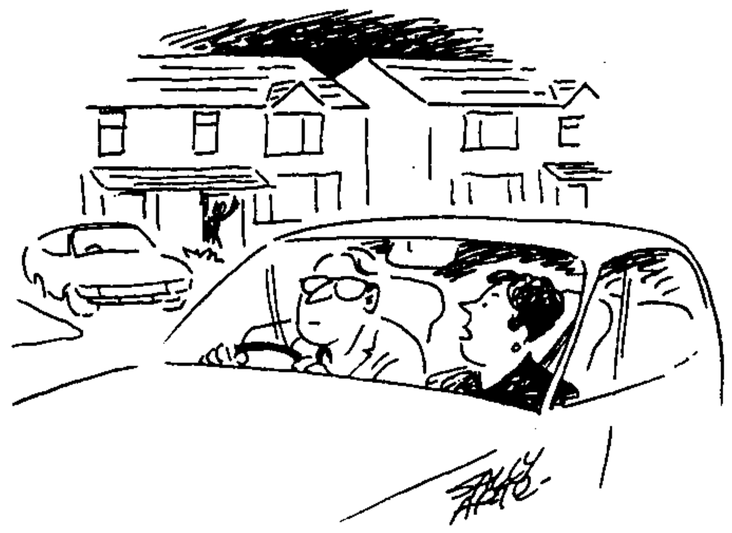
Sir,

An ever decreasing number of tickets is still available for The First Annual Meeting of the Peter Cook Appreciation Society to be held at The Everyman Cafe (beneath the Everyman Cinema) in Hampstead, north London, from 6pm on Tuesday 9 January 1996.

The evening will feature a non-stop showing of rare/classic Cookie footage on a 4' x 4' screen, buffet, and free entry raffle (prizes courtesy of PRIVATE EYE, *Messrs Bell, Smirnoff, a couple of Teachers, and even Napoleon himself!) plus, wait for it... a very rare live, in-person, appearance outside of "Gracelands" (that's the Gracelands Palace Restaurant, Old Kent Road) by none other than "The Chinese Elvis" himself, Mr Elvis Chan! Wait for it? I know I can't!*

There is also a late bar — last orders at midnight. All tickets are priced at £12 (please make cheques/postal orders payable to "J. Wallis" and enclose SAE for return) and cover all above except drinks.

Ever yours,
REG FUTTOCK-ARMITAGE,
24 Mapesbury Road, Kilburn, London, NW2 4JD.



"Talk about maverick free-thinkers! Those weren't Delia Smith recipes"

LUVVIES

[Patsy] Kensit had to suffer for her role — director Philip Haas ordered her to bleach her pubic hair and she had to put up with battalions of insects and spiders crawling all over her body. She says she would like to work with more directors who demand this kind of commitment.

20:20 Magazine

Submitted by Simon Robinson.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Depth charge

Sir,

A.A. Gill's piece "Wouldn't you rather bonk this... but you can't and I can" gives a whole new lack of depth to the word "pisspoor". However, (Hackwatch passim but particularly on John Diamond and Nigella) most of what these columnists write is so sad that we get the point after a couple of lines. It is tough trying to be intelligent and witty with such bollocks — but why try?

Eye read: Rotten Boroughs, Doing The Rounds, Paul Foot, Letters, Hallo.

Eye miss: Pseuds, Victor Lewis Smith, Bores, Diary, John Major.

REV. ANTHONY J. GASKIN,
Preston.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"So you both work in Intensive Care. Any funny stories there?"
TIM VINE, BBC1
(Mrs M. Smith)

"The lads really ran their socks into the ground."
ALEX FERGUSON (Man Utd manager)
(Jerry Flower)

"He [Brian Laudrup] wasn't just facing one defender — he was facing one at the front and one at the back as well."
TREVOR STEVEN, STV
(David Steen)

"If you were in the Brondby dressing room right now, which of the Liverpool players would you be looking at?"
RAY STUBBS, BBC1
(Dr Peter Coles)

Neil Fox: *Prince was No. 1 last week and the week before. We want to know — how many weeks was he No. 1?"*
Listener: *Two.*
Fox: *Correct.*
Capital Radio FM
(R. Mahendran)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

Letter from **Israel**

from Our Own Correspondent

NOT a blade of grass has yet grown on the grave of our late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, but the myths surrounding his murder are already growing at dizzying speed.

The first myth is that there is something new about a Jew killing another Jew. In fact a good dozen murders are annually committed in Israel by Jewish drug dealers, jealous husbands and armed robbers.

Nor is political assassination alien to Tel Aviv. In 1933 Haim Arlosoroff, Rabin's predecessor as Labour leader, was gunned down on the city's beach by two Jewish opponents. Ten years later Yitzhak Shamir's fellow rightwing leader Eliahu Gilad was shot dead in the same spot by a rival.

Even the notion that Mr Rabin was murdered by his long term foes in the Jewish fundamentalist camp is mythological. The two sides used to be very matey. As chief of staff, defence minister and premier, Rabin gradually permitted all orthodox rightists, however loopy, to carry arms. He even created a new form of part-time military service which allowed them to combine weapons training with Bible studies.

Rabin, of course, had his reasons. Unlike most Israelis the psalm-mumbling recruits actually liked to live in the occupied West Bank and they showed no tiresome moral scruples when told to beat up or shoot Arabs. To them, people opposing Jewish rule were simply the descendants of bad tribes like the Amalekites, condemned to extinction by God.

There was also no need to waste much time on prayer: in the trendy new Occupation Theology preached by modern rabbis, Jewish worship of God matters far less than the link between Jews and the Land of Israel — which is not even mentioned in the Ten Commandments. Israel Hess, the rabbi of Tel Aviv's religious Bar Ilan university, actually wrote an article called "Genocide as a good deed in the Bible" for his students.

So certain were the religious right of Rabin's backing that they dismissed his plans for a troop withdrawal from "the holies" as eyewash aimed at the gentiles. Only six months ago, when it became clear that Rabin really meant to carry out the 1993 Oslo agreements, did they grasp their mistake.

The settlement rabbis hastily met to discuss a new religious conundrum: did the duty "to kill the best of gentiles" so as to save the land also apply to treacherous Jews? Letters seeking views on whether Rabin was a "persecutor of Jews" and thus worthy of death were sent to 30 top rabbis in Israel and abroad.

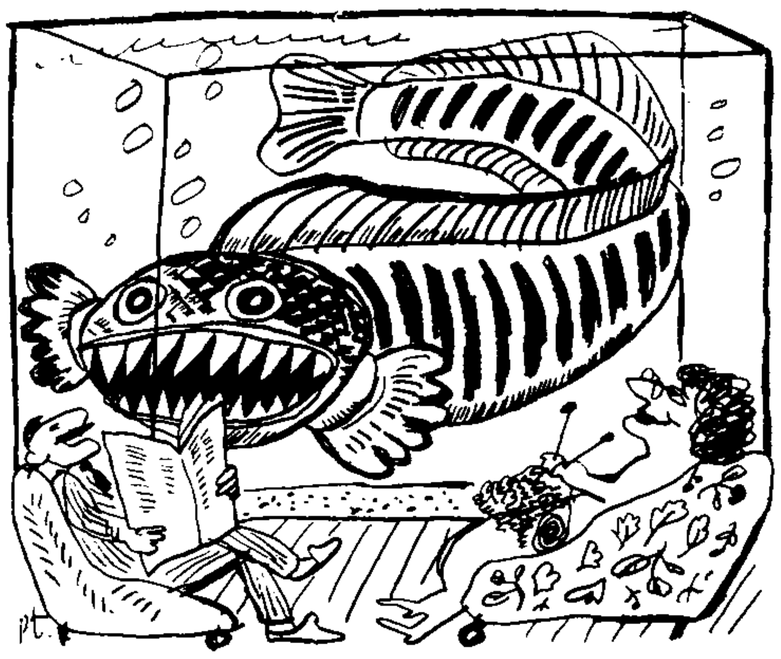
The intellectual challenge was taken up readily. Half the rabbis ruled that Rabin was a "persecutor" and last Yom Kippur, on 4 October 1995, one religious sage read out a special prayer under the premier's window. "We have permission," it said, "to demand from the angels of destruction that they take a sword to this wicked man... to kill him... for handing over the Land of Israel to our enemies, the sons of Ishmael."

The curse, promised the rabbi, would work within a month, and his followers helpfully distributed copies of it to all religious institutions in Israel. Yigal Amir, a graduate of combined military-Bible studies and a student of Bar Ilan university, put it into practice just 32 days later.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY
Victor Lewis-Smith

O "Sir: About five years ago, I purchased a Red-tailed Catfish. At the time, they seemed to be a popular fish at many aquatic stores. After doing hardly any research into their requirements, I chose Ragley, a five-inch fish who I thought would be ideal for my five foot tank. I soon discovered that this fish had an incredible rate of growth, and within eight months the tank was clearly too small so, after some considerable expense, a larger tank and stand were made. He lived very happily in this tank for one year before it, too, was too small.



Luckily, I managed to obtain a disused 72x24x24 inch 'wave tank' from my local university, a bargain at £40.

"Today, just one year on, Ragley has undergone his latest move after outgrowing his tank. This time, however, there was a problem: there was no physical space in the house for a bigger tank. As he was now a member of the family, I did not want to sell him, so there was only one solution, and after the demolition of the garage and six months work, Ragley now lives in a 600 gallon 'tropical' pond with possibility for extensions as he grows. Friends and neighbours think I'm insane, but seeing him happily swimming in his pool with his teeth smiling all the time is all the proof I need. I would like this letter to be used as a warning to your readers. Yours sincerely, Mr Grimley, Coventry." *(Aquarist and Pondkeeper 5/95. Spotter — Alan Morgan)*

—O—

O "Elk are a very serious traffic problem in this country," Torsten Lumabba of the Finnish Transport Ministry told a press conference in Helsinki. "There are lots of them, they're very big, they're not very clever, and they don't take any notice of road signs."

The conference had been called to draw attention to the threat posed to Finnish motorists by wandering elk, the country's biggest non-alcoholic cause of road accidents. "There are hundreds of collisions every year, and up to a dozen Finns die annually after elk-related incidents," Lumabba continued. "Finland is still mourning the loss of its most celebrated tango singer, the legendary Sauli Lehtonen, after a fatal encounter with a full-grown elk earlier this month. The problem is they have rather spindly legs. You hit them with a car and they sort of flip onto the roof and crush you. Or you drive into a tree trying to avoid them.

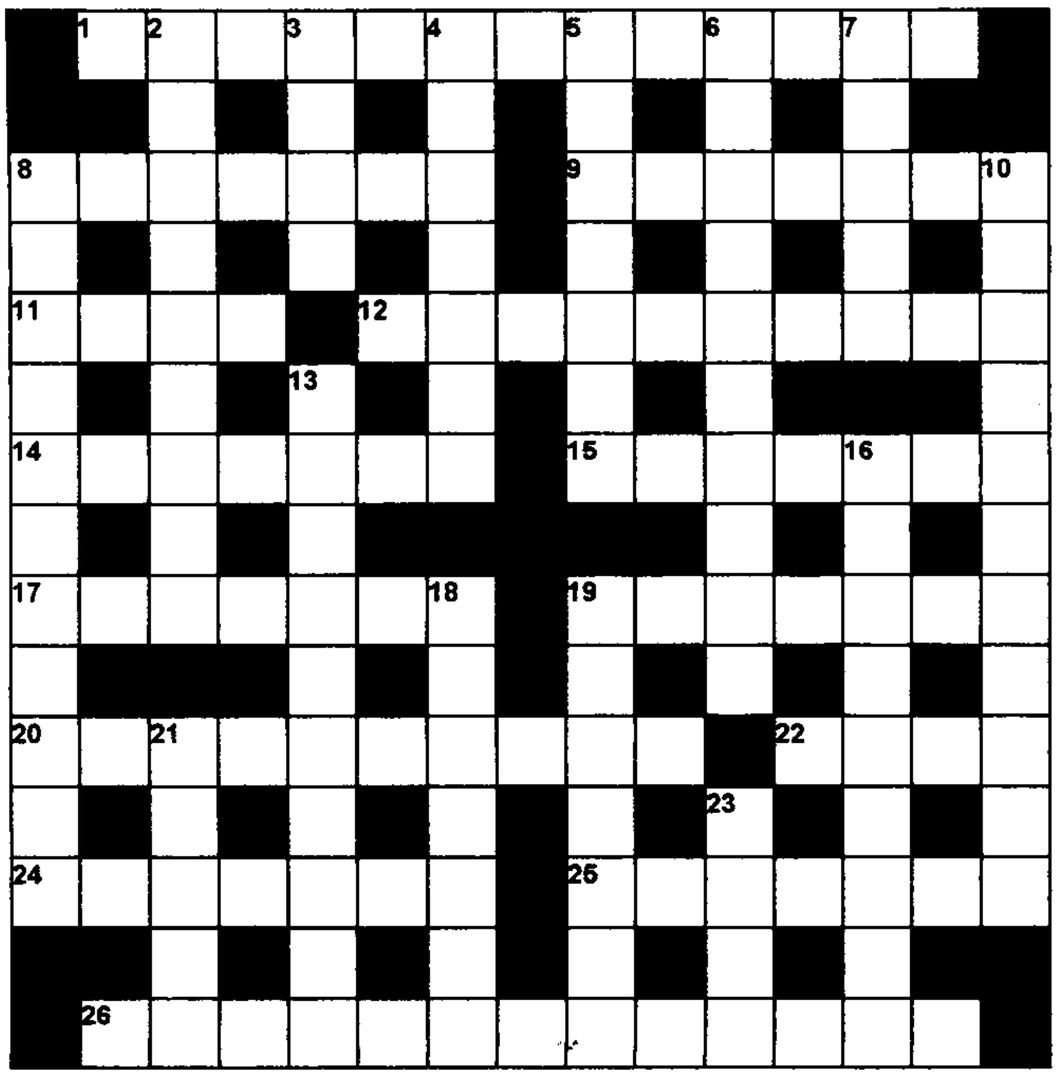
"The government is spending £15 million on building elk underpasses. They'll be 30ft wide and 20ft high so the elk can see the other side. They have to be huge, because there's no way you'll get one of them into a tunnel. Not an elk." *(Associated Press 23/9/95. Spotter — Peter and Lynne Hayes)*

—O—

O "Seven women shall take hold of one man in that day... Isaiah 4:1. *Isaiah 4:1 is a prophecy of seven women going and marrying one man. Hereby note that I, Cyril Gobbley, am willing to be that man, and so fulfill Scripture. If you are a nubile sweety and desire to be one of my seven brides so that you too can help fulfill Scripture, then send a photograph to Box 7134 Saskatoon, SK, Canada, S7K 4J1. My intentions are (all) most honourable. We're doing it because we love the Lord."* (The Star-Phoenix (Saskatchewan) 13/9/95. Spotter — Robert Hawkins)

EYE CROSSWORD 41 by Cyclops

£100 Winner JOHN HENDRICKS



ACROSS

1 Getting genned up PC-wise produces 'Teen Fright' — *Sun* (7,3,3)
8 Our columnist is scum to Brenda (7)
9 Party that makes you puke three different ways! (5-2)
11 Old poet makes pointless video nasty (4)
12 Environment under threat from what the likes of Brenda do, we hear, on behalf of Establishment (4,6)
14 For starters, love tackle has fashionable point (7)
15 Private association of The Sun, Squidgy and Brenda (7)
17 Entertainer gets hard and tosses off (7)
19 Perhaps Royal Mail may give you an unwanted packet (7)
20 Virgin needs direction by one who understands — Old MacDonald, perhaps? (10)
22 Roger somebody's hit? (4)
24 Perhaps Leo, having joined Baring's saviours, sticking up two fingers? (7)
25 Ex-Chancellor possibly gets DCM? Shit! (7)
26 Football club is not an awfully hard up organisation (6,7)

DOWN

2 Our public ones are all private now! (9)
3 In brief a Kennedy phoney (4)
4 Tebbit's type of people who tried to take over Britain (7)
5 Names hiding family receipts (7)
6 As an editor she has her knockers (3,7)
7 English no take legal action — follow? (5)
8 Manual workers' vote? (4,2,5)
10 Autobiographical bugger who ended up down under (5,6)
13 A dumb thing to be in showbiz? (4,6)
16 What the big-head thinks of himself turning into a pseud (9)
18 Had sex when carpet, for example, taken up on date (7)
19 The main filthy lech first favoured by Mellor? (7)
21 Pep needs putting back in ghastly broadcaster! (5)
23 Some fat, hairy tongue (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 24.11.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 40

ACROSS: 8 Lyricist 9 War Cry 10/19 Coitus interruptus 11 Essex Man 12 Chamberlain 15 Unfrock 17 Fat cats 19 (see 10) 23 Galtieri 24 Rogers 25 Henry V 26 Hot pants.

DOWN: 1 Sycophant 2 Birthmark 3 Tissue 4 Othello 5 Swastika 6 Proxy 7 PR man 13 Scapegoat 14 Et tu brute 16 Conceive 18 Jericho 20 Rarity 21 Names 22 U-turn.

NEW HIT MUSICAL

EVA

BY ANDREW LLOYDS-BANK

The incredible story of the beautiful Evita Pollard who with her husband Nicko ran the tinpot dictator-ship known as The Daily Express.

From their base in the Lubyanka, they oversaw the destinies of over 8,000 readers.

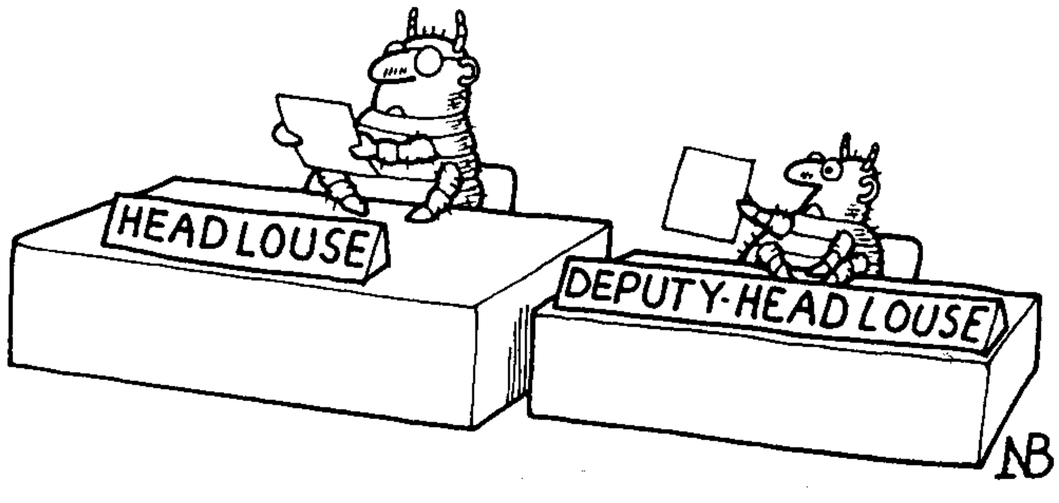
La Bollardia, as she was known, amassed a huge personal fortune including a luxury house in the South of France.

But then came the fall. First Eva, then Nico, were thrown out in a palace revolution that brought in Andrew Lloyd-Webber.

And nothing was heard of any of them ever again.

Hit songs include:

Er... there aren't any.



PULP CLASSIC FICTION

"Drop dead, Darcy, you fucking fuck"

A Cab Driver writes

This week: **Reg Bilge** (Cab No. 393742) on

The Judicial Execution of Mr Ken Saro-Wiwa

GET out the road bloody cyclist! No, I mean these Nigerians, guv, let's be honest, they're not civilised, are they? They're basically living in the Stone Age, going around murdering each other and hanging anyone who doesn't agree with them.

You know what I'd do with that General Abacha bloke? String him up!!

It's the only language they understand.

I had that Ben Okri in the back once. Picked him up after the Booker do at the Guildhall and took him the long way round to Euston, charged him £30. Very nice gentleman he was though.

NEXT WEEK: Simie Heffer (Cab No. 72737) on The Loss To The Nation When Enoch Powell Failed To Become Prime Minister.

How The Internet Saves Lives

A Doctor writes

AS a doctor, I am often asked: "Is the Internet a miracle cure for depression?"

The simple answer is, of course, "Yes, but only for celebrities." If the celebrity is experiencing what are known as bad reviews or *Cellmatis pisspoorensis normalis* (sometimes known as "Gray's Syndrome") he may choose to run away to Bruges and plug himself into the Internet.

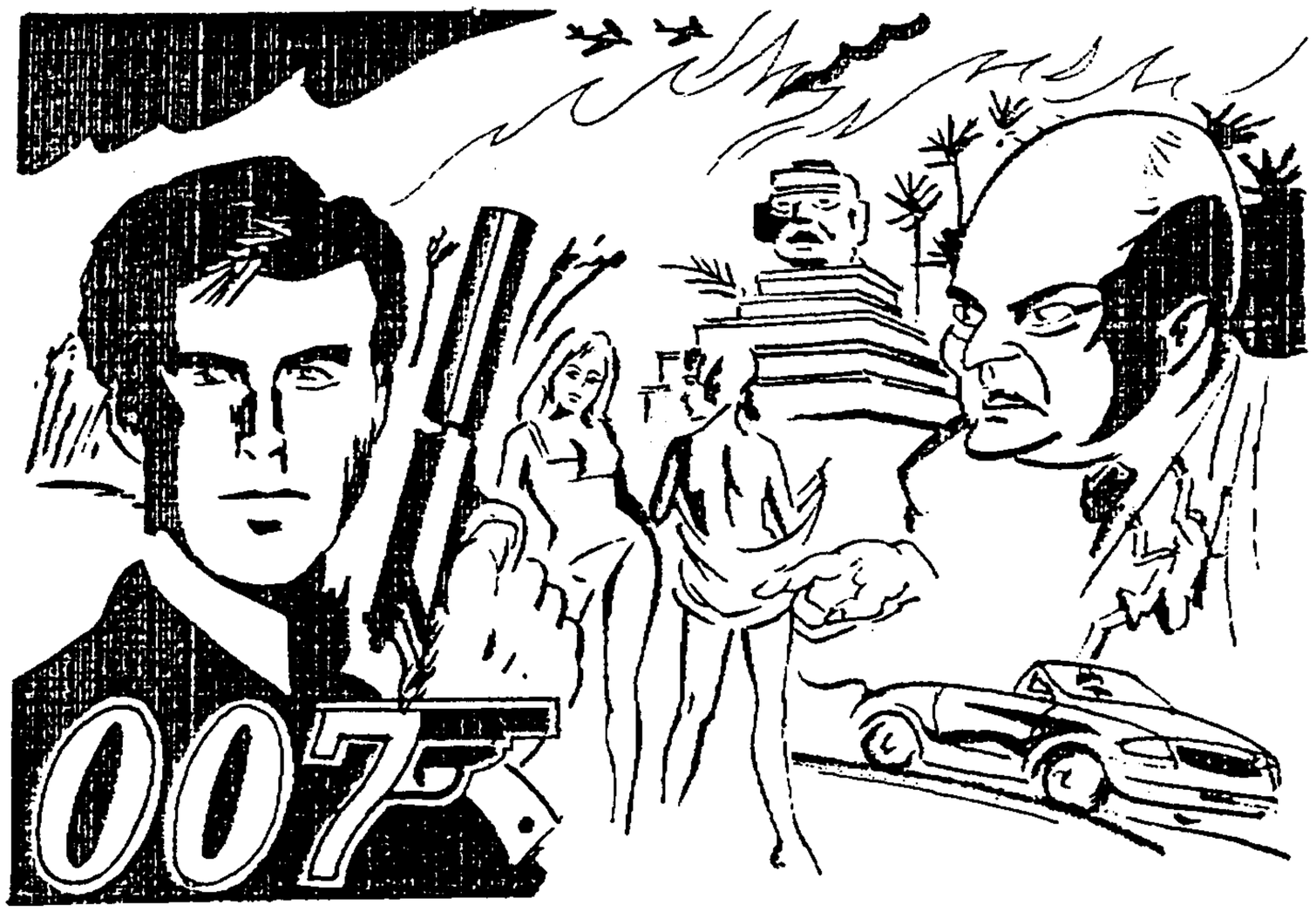
He will then experience immediate relief via electronic messages delivered straight to the brain — e.g. "Stephen, you are marvellous. annarack@trainspotter.co.uk", "Hugs, kisses, luv you, luv you. douglasnerd@bt.net", or "You owe me £500,000, you bastard. simongray@winoclub.soho." *(Shurely shome mishtake? Ed.)*

The patient will immediately experience a sense of well-being and will feel able once again to face ther world — possibly with blond hair.

© A. Doctor

HE'S BACK!

GOLDENEYE 12



007 returns to take on his old enemy, the sinister billionaire known as Goldfinger.

In his remote fortified stronghold in the Mexican jungle, Sir Jammy Goldenballs dreams of taking over Britain.

His plan is to infiltrate his own men into 600 constituencies in the next general election, thus bringing about the downfall of the British Government.

At his side, Oddjob Aspinall is training his killer tigers to deal with any troublemakers.

HMG sends in the one man who can save the world from the power-crazed schemes of the foreign megalomaniac.

Will Bond defeat Goldpaste and his crazed Referendum Troopers? (No.)

CAST IN FULL

JAMES BOND Piers Paul Brosnan
SIR JAMMY GOLDENEYE James Fishpaste
LADY ANNABEL MARMITE Honor Blackman
PUSSY GALORE Barbara Amiel
STAVROS ARSLIKOS Taki
TAKI-DRIVER Nigel Dumpster

NOW SHOWING AT THESE SELECT GNOMEONS

Trelford Bec
Preston East
Jaspan Green
Rusbridger
Stoddard
Dacre
Waterhouse
Holborow Park
Waddeley Junction

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Lord Bottomley, Former Labour Minister for Overseas Developments

So. Farewell then
Lord Bottomley.
Statesman and Labour

MP.

Famous for going to
Zambia
And saying how pleased you were
To be in

Gambia.

What will you say when you
Arrive in heaven?

That you are pleased
To be in Devon?

E.J. Thribb (88½)

NEW SECURITY ROW AS NUTTER KISSES DIANA

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

SCIENTISTS have grafted a laboratory-grown human on to the back of a mouse.

Western Daily Press

NOW YOU DECIDE
LINES CLOSE AT 5pm CALLS COST LESS THAN 10p
Which city should get new stadium?
Yes Ring **0891 111 304**
No Ring **0891 111 305**

Daily Express

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

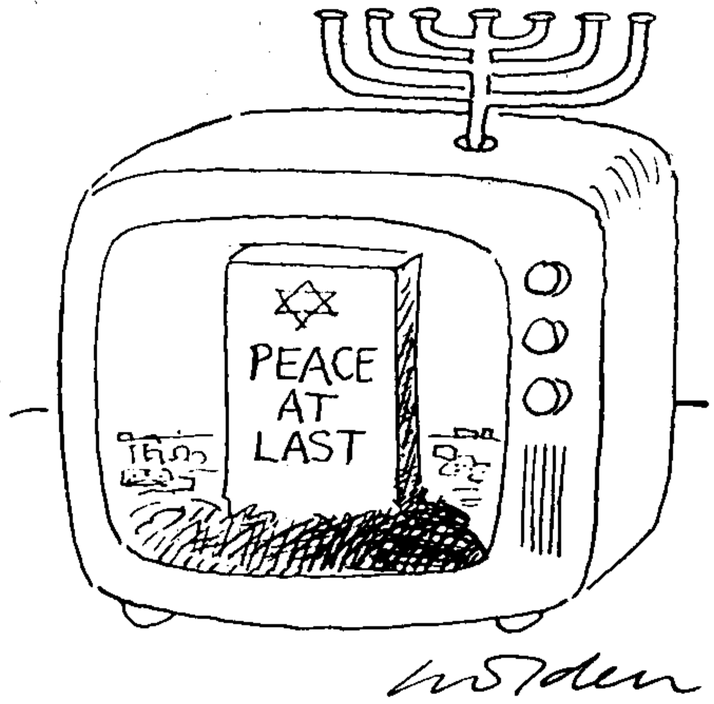
Monday

Today for once really is a very historic day because I heard on the news that the prime minister of Israel Mr Rabin had been shot. This is very sad because Mr Rabin was in the middle of a peace process. Like many world statesmen involved in peace processes, he made enemies, particularly the right wing in his own country, many of whom are clearly several apples short of a picnic.

Mr Heseltine rang through on our special direct hot line to say that I would be flying out to Israel to join all the other world statesmen at the funeral. Imagine my not inconsiderable annoyance when I boarded the aeroplane and found that I had been given a seat between Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown. Mr Blair was in the window seat and kept on saying things like "Look, John, there's Brussels — isn't it beautiful?" Mr Ashdown meanwhile was in the aisle seat, reading a book, which kept on making him laugh out loud. When I looked closer I was in no small measure furious that it was Terry's book which he had bought at Smith's in the departure lounge. While we were flying over Strasbourg, which needless to say Mr Blair pointed out with one of his silly smiles which he thinks are going to win him the election, which they are not, oh no, our pilot Captain Collimore made an announcement. "Please refasten your seat belts," he said, "as we are very fortunate to have His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales at the controls." For some reason Mr Blair stopped smiling.

Tuesday

Today while Mr Rabin was being buried, I met a large number of world statesmen and had many important summit conferences, some of which lasted over 10 seconds. My friend, Mr Herr Kohl, said: "Guten Morgen, Herr Major, it is good to know you have left your country in ze excellent hands of Herr Heseltine. Herr Hezzler is ze one to make ze trains run on time, nicht war?" Many of the other leaders said the same thing in their own languages, or at least I think they did. As for my own peace process, I was very pleased to meet Mr Bruton, who is the Teacuph of Ireland, who assured me that his friend Mr Adam would not be handing over even a water pistol until the British occupying forces had returned to England to be tried for murder in front of the European Court of Human Rights. Breakfast in Israel is not at all agreeable. There are no Coco-Pops and no bacon. All they have is grapefruit segments and yoghurt, which Prince Charles told me he enjoyed very much. He was very friendly to me when we met at the service, and asked me what I did for a living and whether I had come a long way.



Wednesday

In my hotel room last night I watched the Good Morning Globe Show on the CNN channel with Waldo Applebaum and Barbara Blackadder. It was not very interesting, except for the last item which was called "Those Krazy Brits". Apparently, while I have been away, the government has had a huge defeat on the Nolan Report. "No, we have not," I said to the television. "I commissioned the Nolan Report, and I am delighted that they have voted in favour of my idea." But then Mr Applebaum said: "Poor old Johnnie Major — goofed again! Doesn't that guy ever get anything right?" "Oh no," I told Mr Applebaum crossly, "I am in no way to blame. Mr Heseltine is in charge while I am away." Miss Blackadder, ignoring my very sensible point, then showed a photograph of a man falling into a large pile of manure. "That's how it must feel to be Prime Minister of Britain tonight. As we say, 'Sleazy come, sleazy go. Have a nice night!' Then there was a weather map for Montreal.

Friday

Today I flew to a place called New Zealand which is where they are having a Commonwealth Conference. It was a very long flight, but luckily when I arrived there were some real world statesmen to talk to, not Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown crowing about how I had been defeated on Nolan, which I had not been. Oh no. It was Mr Heseltine who was defeated. Anyway, at the big dinner with the Queen, I was very privileged to sit quite near to her with Mrs Tiri Kai O'Halloran, who is the wife of the foreign minister of New Zealand, and Sir Ramprakash Saltimbokka, who is the prime minister of Sarawak. "We very much liked your television programme," they said. "The one where you went to visit the Polish gnome factory." I had to very much put him in his place for making such a silly remark. "For a start," I told him, "they are not gnomes, they are garden ornaments. And, secondly, I am not my brother Terry. I am John Major, the prime minister of Great Britain." "Then you are a complete bastard," said Sir Ramprakash. "You are a friend of the nuclear fascist Chirac. Down with nukes. Down with yourself." Mrs O'Halloran then butted in: "Yes, and you didn't even let your brother post his postcard at Number Ten Downing Street. What could be lower than that?" So saying, they both got up from the table and went to join Mr Umbrellawallah, the Life President of the Democratic Dictatorships of Rumbabwe.

Saturday

The Nigerians have upset everyone by hanging all their opposition. It is certainly going too far in my view, although a lot of my fellow leaders here seem to think it is a very good idea which they wish they had thought of.

Mr Heseltine rang me up this morning to tell me that I am outraged by the executions and that Britain will no longer sell the Nigerians any weapons.

"Do you mean like we did sell any to Iraq?" I asked him. "Exactly, John," he said. "You're learning. Who knows? One day you could become deputy prime minister."

Sunday

Today is Remembrance Day. Luckily this is written in my diary lest I forget it. Which I didn't. I was not inconsiderably irritated therefore to turn on the television in my room and see on "Late Night Kiwi Round-Up" that Mr Heseltine was standing where I normally stand at the Cenotaph, putting down the wreath.

Anybody would think that he was Prime Minister, which he is not.

I rang him up to remind him of this and a woman told me that Mr Heseltine could not take any calls because he was too busy writing the Queen's speech for next week and simultaneously having his portrait painted in oils ready to hang in the National Portrait Gallery next to Mr Churchill's.

Monday

Mr Heseltine appeared on the television again today on "Good Morning Kiwi Round-Up" to announce the sanctions against Nigeria, I told him to his face: "You are hopeless" and switched him off. That is the way to deal with Mr Heseltine. Oh yes.

On sale now – **The 4th and Final Secret Diary of John Major**. £4.99

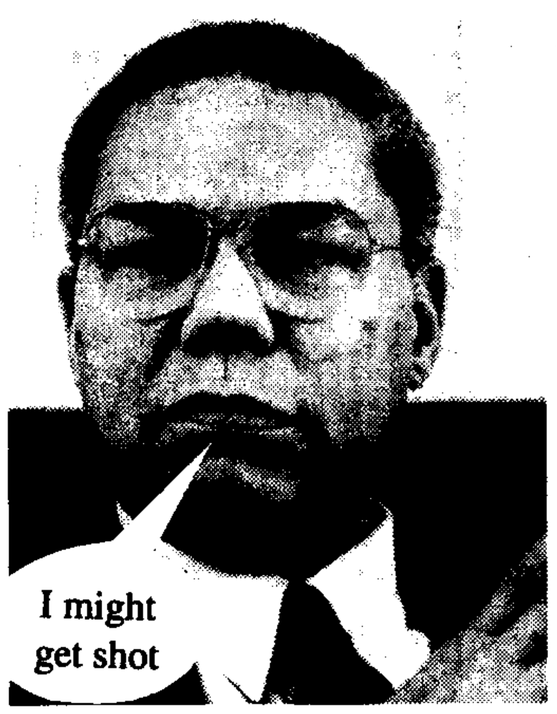
THE BOOK OF RABIN

Chapter 94: The Suffering Servant

1. And lo, there came among the children of Israel one who was known as Rab-in, which is to say the Prince of Peace.
2. And Rab-in had once been a mighty warrior, known throughout the land of Israel for his smiting.
3. For verily in his time he hath smitten more of the Arab-ites, the Araf-ites, the Leban-ites, the Syrian-ites, the Jordan-ites and all the other ites than there are seeds upon the pomegranate tree.
4. For he said unto the children of Israel: 'Lo, in six days I will smite them all, even the sons of Egypt.'
5. And so it came to pass. And on the seventh day Rab-in rested, for all the Arab-ites and sons of Sadat were slain.
6. And the smoke of slaughter rose up into heaven. And Rab-in looked upon the work he had wrought, and saw that it was good.
7. But when Rab-in waxed old and grew full of years, he became weary of the smiting.
8. And, lo, in that time Rab-in had a dream. And in his dream he saw the mighty lion of Israel lying down with the snake of Araf-at.
9. So Rab-in girded his loins and sent unto Araf-at, saying 'Come, let us sit down and take sup together, thou and I, and let us make peace.
10. 'For verily thou and I are waxing too old for all this smiting. The white hairs on thy beard are like unto the snows of Hebron, the wrinkles on thy face are even as those on the prune that has lain too long in the noonday sun.
11. 'And I am not feeling too good myself.'
12. And Araf-at saith unto Rab-in, 'Thou hast a point. For if we do not make peace, between thy seed and my seed, the sons of Ham-mas will get me.'
13. And they arose and embraced one another, on the lawn of the house that is white. And each took the other's hand, with a bit of prompting.
14. And they call-ed it the peace process.
15. And so it came to pass that Rab-in was hailed in all the land as wonderful, counsellor, the Prince of Peace etc.
16. And Rab-in entered Jerusalem riding upon a Mercedes.
17. And the people cried out unto him: 'Hosanna! Blessed is the Peacemaker, for he shall see God!'
18. But this came about rather sooner than the prophets had foretold.
19. For there was in the land of Israel one Yig-al, son of Amir, who was an Zealot, dwelling on the near side of the River Jordan.
20. And there was hatred in the heart of Yig-al, for he saith unto himself: 'We have built for ourselves pleasant apartments, even furnished with swimming pools and gardens filled with the pear that is called avocado.
21. 'And if Rab-in shall haveth his way, all this Promised Land will be taken away from us, and given to the Araf-ites, even as a pearl is thrown upon a dunghill.'
22. So Yig-al rose up against Rab-in and slew him.
23. And there was wailing and gnashing of teeth in all the land.
24. For Yig-al was one of the sons of Israel.
25. And, for once, the children of Israel could not heap the blame upon anyone but their own people.
26. And this made them wail even louder.

Here Beginneth the Book of Peres...

WAR HERO BOWS OUT



Terry Knott, 35, of Manor Road, Wallington, Surrey, plied the girls, aged 13 and 14, with pink champagne and cocktails then lay between them on a double bed. "No doubt they were keen to go to the balls and you took advantage of that fact," judge Richard Hawkins told him.

Evening Standard

Apologies to Ian Gowans (N° 111). Sibelius was of course a Finn, not a twin.

European Commission Staff Newspaper

BLACK GENERAL 'NOT TO RUN'

by Our Foreign Staff
Lunchtime O'Goni

THE unpopular black military leader who has taken his country by storm last night shocked no one by announcing that "he would not run".

"I am here to stay," said General Abutcha, the uncharismatic Nigerian dictator. "You cannot get rid of me. Not John Major, the Queen or even someone important like Nelson Mandela.!"

Power-Mania

When asked whether he was concerned about the dangers of assassination he replied: "No of course not. I have assassinated all my my opponents and no one has lifted a finger."

General Abutcha also revealed that he has no plans to stand in any election.

"There are no elections to stand in and there won't be any either. I am dictator for life and the opposition are all dead.

"I have no problems", he concluded. "As you say in your country, you can be sure of Shell."

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HANZ-Z-Z-ARD

Debate on the Report by Lord Nolan Regarding Sleaze. 3.15pm

Speaker Mrs Basil Boothroyd: I call on the Rt Hon Mr Michael Heseltine, First Lord of the Jungle, to move the motion.

Rt Hon Hezza (Henley-on-Sleaze, Con): In order to preserve the good name of this House, Her Majesty's government accepts the recommendation of Lord Nolan that honourable members must declare all those occasions when they have been paid to ask questions or lobby on behalf of whomsoever they might have been paid by.

Sir Bufton Tufton (Lymeswold, Con): I am sure I speak for the whole House when I congratulate the Government on its courageous stand for complete honesty and openness on this issue. If the great profession of politics is to continue to attract men of the calibre of myself, it is quite right that we should continue to enjoy the right to be paid for our services by whomsoever has enough money to slip us the odd ten thou. In my case, this is the Casino and Scratchcard Federation of Great Britain, who quite rightly in my view urge that lottery tickets should be available to the under-5s, who are at present deprived of the right to contribute to a whole range of charities. Nevertheless, it would in my view do an immense disservice to the good name of this House, if we were to accept the view of the opposition that we should have to declare just how much we are paid, when in most cases this amounts to nothing more than a mere token payment of, say, £100,000 a year. For this kind of trivial figure to be bandied about in the media could only lead to widespread misunderstanding of our motives, and a regrettable degree of envy among those less privileged than ourselves. *(Tory cheers)*

Mr Barry Cashcard (Hole-in-the-Wall, Con): May I take this opportunity to remind the House that an MP's salary is so pitifully small that many of us on this side of the House would find it impossible to survive at all unless our emoluments were supplemented by the benevolence of such public spirited organisations as, in my case, the Eurotica Television Company from Holland. This very fine organisation has done a great deal to promote the cause of late-night adult family entertainment with such highly-educational and stimulating programmes as *The Kama Sutra Guide To A More Fulfilled Married Life* (uncensored) and *Naughty Dutch Schoolgirls Go To Sweden For A Sizzling Weekend. (Tory cheers and cries of "Where can we buy the video?")*

The Rt Hon Sir Edward Heath (Morningcloud, Con): Madame Speaker, I have never heard anything so outrageous in all my life. The very idea of it. I ask you. That someone of my stature and standing should be expected to explain just how I was able to afford my extremely fine house in the Close in Salisbury, not to mention my extremely fine collection of very important paintings by world-famous artists and the yacht which I used to be the captain of in the days when, as everyone knows, I won the famous Fastnet race on behalf of Britain, a very fine achievement which that woman, to name but one, could never have matched. Nor could she have conducted a world-famous orchestra, namely the Hong Kong Radio Symphony Orchestra, as I recently did under the very generous sponsorship of my friends in the Anglo-Chinese Promotion of Trade And Friendship Society. The fact that I was paid a conductor's fee of £50,000 in tribute to my standing as a world-class musician is entirely irrelevant to my position as an elder statesman and a member of this House. *(Tory snores)*

Mr Dennis Bolsover (Skinner, Lab): I would like t'know, 'ow is it that we 'ave t'put up wi' t'monkey. Where's t'bloody organ grinder, that's what I want t'know?

Rt Hon Hezza (Deputy Prime Minister): I am the organ grinder *(laughter)*. The monkey is in New Zealand. *(More laughter)*

Rt Hon Sir Edward Heath: Talking of organ-playing, may I remind the House that I am not only a famous conductor, but also a very distinguished performer on that particular instrument. A CD of my rendering of the Celebrated Grocer Fugue sponsored by the Anglo-Chinese Cultural Fellowship is now available from your favourite record store.

(House empties to sound of tills being emptied and pockets being filled)

She's warm, she's witty, she's wise.

She's

GLENDA SLAGG

gals took their lead from the Ice Princess!?! Hands off, Mister. The Lady's not for bonking!?!!!

■ ***SPARE a thought for Julia "News-at-Ten" Somerville?! BONG!! Top Newsreader in Kiddie-Porn-Pic Scandal!! BONG!! Julia Innocent — No Charges Brought!?! BONG!! And why Britain's hippos are going to the Dentist!!? (This is dreadful. Ed.)***

Things have come to a pretty pass when you can't even take your family snaps into your local Boots without being arrested in the middle of the night for being a pedagogue (sub: please check).

Big Brother!!? Tell me about it?!? This isn't 1984, for God's sake!? It's 1995!?!!!

□ PUT a sock in it Julia!! The police are only doing their job after all?! And what was the poor chemist meant to think when he sees pictures of your toddler with no clothes on!?!! Blimey!! You were lucky ITN didn't give you the Boots!?! Geddit?! Go on! Bong off!?!

● ***WON the Lottery yet?! Me neither!!?***

■ HERE they are — Glenda's Winter Warmers!?

Darcy — Mmmm!?! Come on round to my place, Big Boy. I'm not proud and I'm not prejudiced!?!

Diego Maradona — Mmm?! Fancy a bit of handball?!? You can score any way you like with me?!?

Darcy — Mmmm!? Once more into the breeches!?! Geddit?!? Mmmm!?! *(You're fired. Ed.)*

Byeeeeeee!

© All newspapers

■ **PULL the other one, Di Darling!?!**

So you're celibate, are you?!?

And isn't that a pig flying over there!?!

Who are you trying to kid?! Let's face it, sweetheart, everybody knows you're Di-ing for it?!! Geddit?! Of course you do, all the time!?!??

□ *HATS OFF to the Princess of Wales!!?! At last there's someone who's got the guts to say "Forget it fellas"!! Di's one brave lady who can tell the world she's through with that three-letter word!?! S-E-X stoopid!! Yes, it's time Britain's*

● COME off it, Princess Hot-Pants with your skirt up round yer knickers and your bay window fallin' out all over the pavement!?! We all know what you want?!?!! S-E-X!!? And now!?! You're Di-ing for it!?! *(You've done this. Ed.)*

THE HAPPY REAPER

ROW OVER NEW TATE EXHIBIT

by Our Art Staff **Brian Sewage**

THE Tate Gallery is at the centre of a growing storm after accepting a new piece of work entitled "Cheque From The Lottery".

The cheque, which measures 5 inches by 2 inches, is printed on paper, overlaid with biro, and is signed by Mrs Bottomley.

It shows seven figures grouped together and is said to be worth over £50 million pounds.

"What does it mean?" asked one baffled critic. "It means that the Tate can buy up this old power station and fill it full of garbage", replied a Tate spokesman.

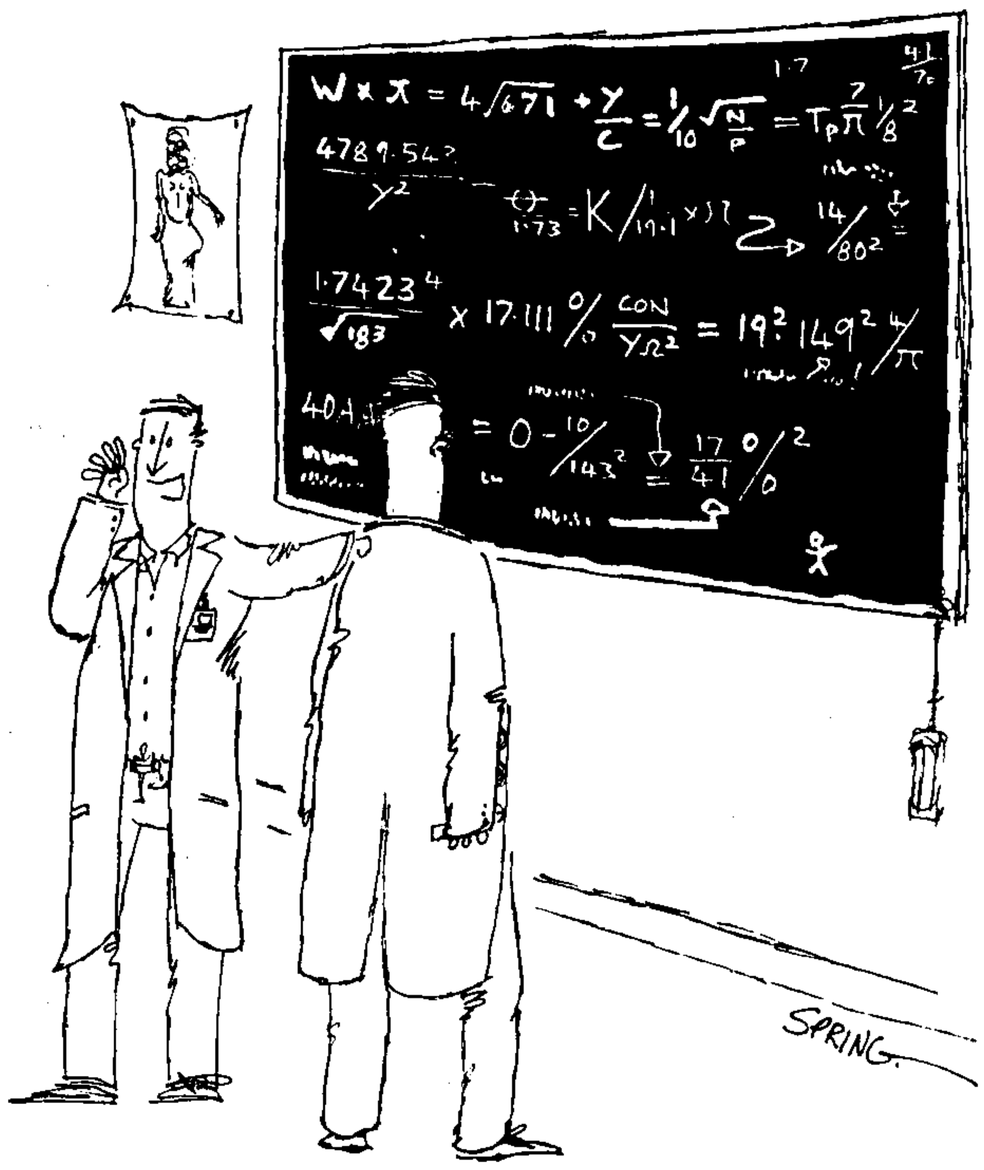
Anthea Turner Prize

Some art-lovers have expressed their distaste at the cheque, labelling it "shocking, obscene" and "a deliberate attempt to offend the sensibilities of the public".

But it has its defenders too. A curator from the Tate countered "Those comments are rubbish. I am going to buy them at once and put them in a glass case".

That Stomach-Turner Prize shortlist in full

1. *Dead Horse:* Flogged by Damien Wirst.
2. *Disappearing Up Your Own Arse* by Mona Lisa *(shurely 'Hatoum'? Ed.)*. The celebrated performance artist puts a TV camera up her own bottom.
3. *Blank Look* by Callum Innitawful? A series of empty canvases reflecting the artist's lack of ideas. *(That's enough shortlist, Ed.)*



"Hey guys, guess what? Gordon's explained women..."

LETTERS TO THE SPECTATOR

Facial prejudice

Sir: I was horrified last week to pick up the first edition of the Spectator under its new editor Mr Johnson only to find in the diary column an outrageous and unpleasant attack on his predecessor Mr Lawson.

The description of Mr Lawson by Alan Clark as "a pasty-faced, slit-eyed creep" was clearly anti-dominic.

At a time when anti-dominicism is on the increase in this country, it is surely irresponsible to publish remarks of a purely facial nature. This is nothing less than facism and the new editor should be ashamed of himself.

In future may I suggest Mr Johnson avoids such inflammatory pieces and sticks instead to running innocuous articles about how the Jews have taken over Hollywood, like I did.

Domineering Lawson
The Editor of the Sunday Telegraph

Backbenchers rebel on 'No fault' divorce

by Our Political Staff
Simon Hefferniceday

TORY backbenchers were openly revolting ***(So what's new? Ed. © The Daily Sketch 1873)*** **over an attempt to stop "quickie divorces".**

"It's appalling," said Sir Bufton-Tufton. "If your relationship with someone deteriorates because, say, he's going to lose the next election then it's ridiculous to have to wait a year before you can dump him."

Sir Bufton continued "Why should there be a cooling down period where we try and make things work? It is entirely his fault and you can't pretend it isn't. We want immediate separation from John, custody of the party and a very large amount of money from external directorships that we don't have to declare."

John Major is 53 points behind Labour.

Great Bores Of Today.

"...they keep on saying it's safe but we've heard that before no I wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole what's it called Bovine Encephalitis is it? anyway BSM for short and it turns into JCB in humans apparently and they are trying to cover it up but you can't because it's happening everywhere and it was on the news and in the paper some child got it probably school dinners or whatever and I read that no vegetarians have got it which is indicative isn't it? admittedly cows are vegetarians but then they are being fed sheep bits and chicken stuff which drives them mad it's obvious no you won't catch me eating it anyone want anything? I'm just going down to Macdonald's..."

A Sylvie Krin Special

Uneasy Lies the Head...

THE STORY so far: Charles has been invited to record a CD of his favourite scenes from Shakespeare.

Now read on...

"YOU CAN start speaking when the green light goes on, Your Majesty." The voice of Sir Robert Luvvie-trouser, familiar to audiences from his countless voiceovers for building societies, low-fat yoghurts and Air Malaysia, echoed in Charles's earphones.

It was so exciting to be here in a real studio, directed by the legendary Sir Robert, acting Shakespeare, along with Dame Judi Lunch and Sir Kenneth McBranflake.

Charles's mind raced back to his first stumbling efforts as a thespian in those far-off days at Gordonstoun, when he had been picked to play the Second Serving Wench in Dr Himmler's production of *The Merry Ex-Wives of Windsor*.

What was his line then? "Good morrow, sirrah, haveth a nice day." And how many sleepless nights he had spent tossing and turning on his narrow bed in the Albert Speer Dormitory, worrying about how to get across the full Shakespearean meaning in those few short words.

And then how it had all gone so tragically wrong on the day, with his father, the Duke, sitting in the front row. He had panicked, his mind had gone blank, and all he had managed to stammer back to Falstaff was "Ah Neddy niggy-naggy-noo" from his beloved *Goon Show*. Everyone had been very kind and laughed, except his father who, purple with rage, had sent Charles on a 28-mile run with full pack up the heather-clad slopes of Ben Looney.

"That's a wonderfully dramatic pause, your Majesty," crackled Sir Robert in his ear, "but could we have the speech now, please?"

"Oh, yes, of course," Charles stuttered, his reverie broken. "You are sure that I'm the right person to do this speech, aren't you? I mean, playing Prince Hal like this?"

"I have never been more certain of anything, sire, in all my years in the theatre," soothed the unctuous knight of the stage. "I mean, it's so wonderfully appropriate, sire, that you — a great prince — should play this great prince. It's unique. I can't think of anyone on earth better equipped to speak the immortal lines. Now could we just try it again from the top?"

Charles concentrated harder than ever on the specially typed out script in front of him. It was so incredibly important to communicate the incomparable beauty and majesty of Shakespeare's verse to the younger generation. Who knows, this might be a turning point in the decay of sort of everything that he'd been fighting to protect...

The green light flashed insistently. "Good morrow, sirrah, haveth a nice day."

"Cut!"

"APPARENTLY even the professionals need 30 takes. But I did it in only 23." Camilla looked admiringly across the room at the man she loved, as Charles tried to put the newly minted CD into the right hole in the Nikleesson 3000 Super-Midi Audio system, which had been specially installed for the occasion that afternoon by Jaspan Radio of Tetbury.

Camilla's heart felt so much lighter now that she was truly divorced. Now at last the two of them could be together, like a real couple. They could make real plans for the future. Weekends, holidays, perhaps even Coronations...

"You see, in this very famous scene that I played with Sir Robert, you won't know it, but it's very famous, I play this Prince, Hal. Only he's just heard that he's become the King, do you see?"

Camilla's heart leaped at the word King. For if there was a King, surely he would have to have a Queen? Was he trying to tell her something?

"Oh, Charles," she sighed...

"No, pay attention, Camilla", Charles broke in crossly. "This is important. You see, now that he's the King, everything's changed. He has to put aside his old life, when he was just a Prince. He has to reject all his old friends, like this old man Falstaff and Mistress Quickly Parker-Bowles..."

A dark cloud passed across her face. "...and these friends are pretty upset, obviously, about being given the brush-off. But he's right to do it. He simply can't associate with such people any more, d'you see? I mean, it's all incredibly moving."

A silent tear trickled down Camilla's perfectly formed cheek.

"I know," said Charles. "It made me cry when I first heard it too."

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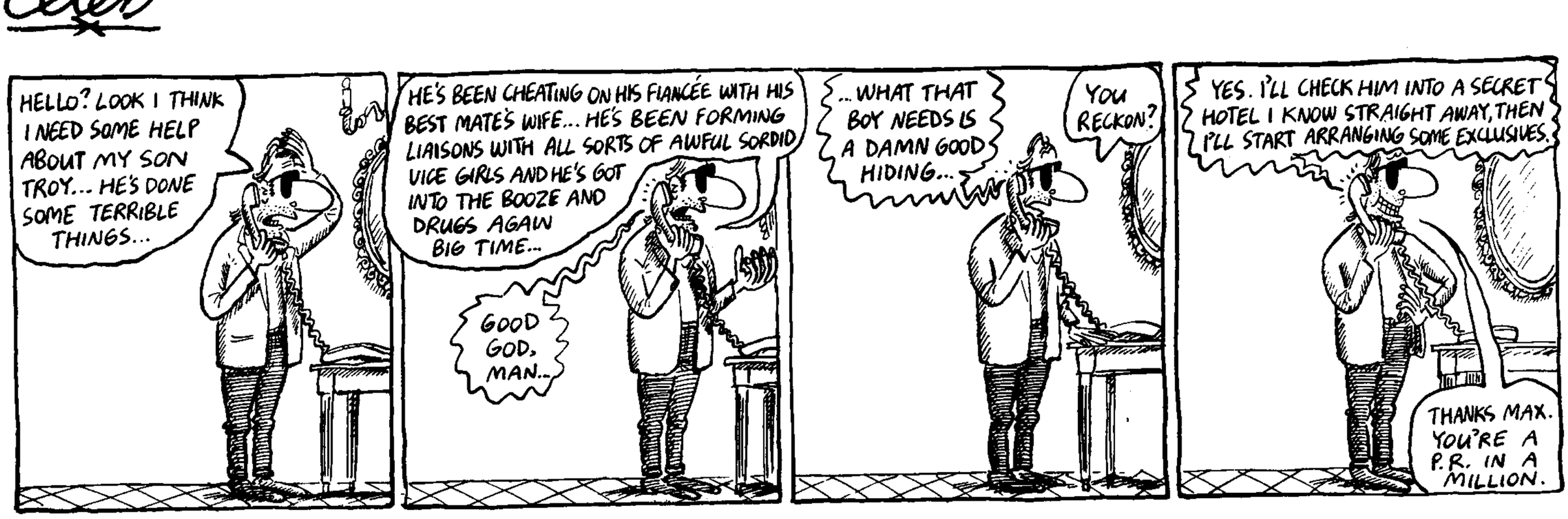
Celeb

LIGGER


HELLO? LOOK I THINK I NEED SOME HELP ABOUT MY SON TROY... HE'S DONE SOME TERRIBLE THINGS...
HE'S BEEN CHEATING ON HIS FIANCÉE WITH HIS BEST MATE'S WIFE... HE'S BEEN FORMING LIAISONS WITH ALL SORTS OF AWFUL SORDID VICE GIRLS AND HE'S GOT INTO THE BOOZE AND DRUGS AGAIN BIG TIME...
GOOD GOD, MAN...
...WHAT THAT BOY NEEDS IS A DAMN GOOD HIDING...
YOU RECKON?
YES. I'LL CHECK HIM INTO A SECRET HOTEL I KNOW STRAIGHT AWAY, THEN I'LL START ARRANGING SOME EXCLUSIVES.
THANKS MAX. YOU'RE A P.R. IN A MILLION.

DIARY

JANET STREET-PORTER'S MEN: WILL SELF & DAVE STEWART

Janet Street-Porter: Totally mega-brill you two amazing guys could schlepp in here today, 'cos you're two of the most fan-bloody-tastic mega-success stories in youth culture today. Totally amazing, Dave, you must be over the bloody moon with your success. I mean, it must make you wanna boogie all night long, like totally get down and get with it, you know what I mean, guys?

Dave Stewart: It's like a total nightmare. I mean like even when I was a kid I like felt sort of TRAPPED, you know. Like, perhaps I was wearing a blue pullover but what I really wanted to wear was a green pullover, so I like felt sort of TRAPPED in the blue pullover, and that.

Will Self: Like Wittgenstein, I feel very serendipitous to the conceptual synaesthesia of Dave's semiological dilemma, as Camus once said, but then in many ways I have sympathy with existentialism, as is clear from a close textual analysis of that extraordinary passage in my last book, "Chop It Off", where the 90-year-old tramp has nothing to stir his tea with so he cuts off his own penis, then, finding he has no penis, cuts off his big toe and grafts it on in its place with a slice of Dairylea.

Dave Stewart: Heavy number.

Janet Street-Porter: You guys are so bloody brill, you really are. What's it like to be a genius? Obviously I know from a woman's point of view, but what's it like for a guy genius, Dave?

Dave Stewart: Nightmare, basically. Like, every morning, I wake up and think, "What a nightmare. I just woke up". Then I go back to sleep. And then I'm really fucked 'cos I'm not awake.

Janet Street-Porter: That's a pretty uncool trip, Dave, like a —

Dave Stewart: Nightmare.

Janet Street-Porter: That's it. Nightmare.

Dave Stewart: Then when I'm asleep, I might have a nightmare, and that's a, like —

Janet Street-Porter: Nightmare?

Dave Stewart: Nightmare, yeah.

Will Self: Heidigger.

Janet Street-Porter: Heidi?

Will Self: Heidigger.

Janet Street-Porter: Oh, hi!

Janet Street-Porter: The thing that's totally mega-brill about you guys is the way you, you know, like do the *zeitgeist*.

Will Self: Mallarmé.

Janet Street-Porter: Know it well. "Wake up, Maggie, I think I got somethin' to say to you!". Love it. Very seventies. I'm deeply into the whole nostalgia thing. It's so *modern*.

Dave Stewart: Can be a nightmare if you look at it in a different way. I mean, like, I've had twenty top ten singles and I'm like a big success and I got all this money but whenever I like want to get from one end of the room to another I still have to walk, or crawl. Walk or crawl. Whichever. There's no way out. And sometimes I'm sitting down, and then I stand and I think, god, I'm putting all this creative energy just into not falling over, into balancing on these two feet, and it's such a waste, it's, like, a total —

Janet Street-Porter: Nightmare.

Dave Stewart: Right.

Janet Street-Porter: The thing that really things me about you two guys is that you really, you know, thingy the feelings of a generation.

Will Self: "Articulate?"

Janet Street-Porter: That too.

Will Self: I think we're living in a continuum.

Janet Street-Porter: We're all part of the continuum of Europe now, what with joining the Common Market and that. And how do you feel, Will, about the artist's role in this new sort of quotes "Thingy sort of" close quotes society?

Will Self: Frankly, it fucks me up and screws my head to the floor and then pisses on it from a great height. The British have never liked their novelists to be hierophantic decocters of augural spectograms, in the postlapserian sense, and it frightens British society as a whole when one of us has the quasi-Dostolevskian nerve to acknowledge that he is at a cultural and semiological apex of a semiological post-Freudian structural seismic shift in perceptions, in the same way it would frighten them, *vis à vis* being frightened, if I were to rip off my left ear and eat it with a splurge of ketchup before spewing it up all over the walls and then writing my name in it with my outstretched tongue. So what they are driven to do is to crush the artist's testicles until the pus runs out. And then lick it all up.

Janet Street-Porter: Amazing image. Totally memorable. The guy's a genius. And like, as another total bloody mega genius, Dave, what's your idea of fun?

Dave Stewart: When I was a child, six or seven, I sometimes got an ice-lolly from a so-called grown-up. And I'd really look forward to this ice-lolly, like for weeks, but then when I'd got it I'd find that if you left it out in the sun for a long time, like an hour or more, it'd melt, so eventually it wouldn't be there any more. And I thought that was a real downer, it really freaked me out. Now every time I see an ice-lolly I totally identify with that ice-lolly, I'm like melting and I have to go and sit in the freezer compartment of my fridge with like a stick up my arse. But that's not fun. It's more of a er —

Janet Street-Porter: Nightmare. Right.

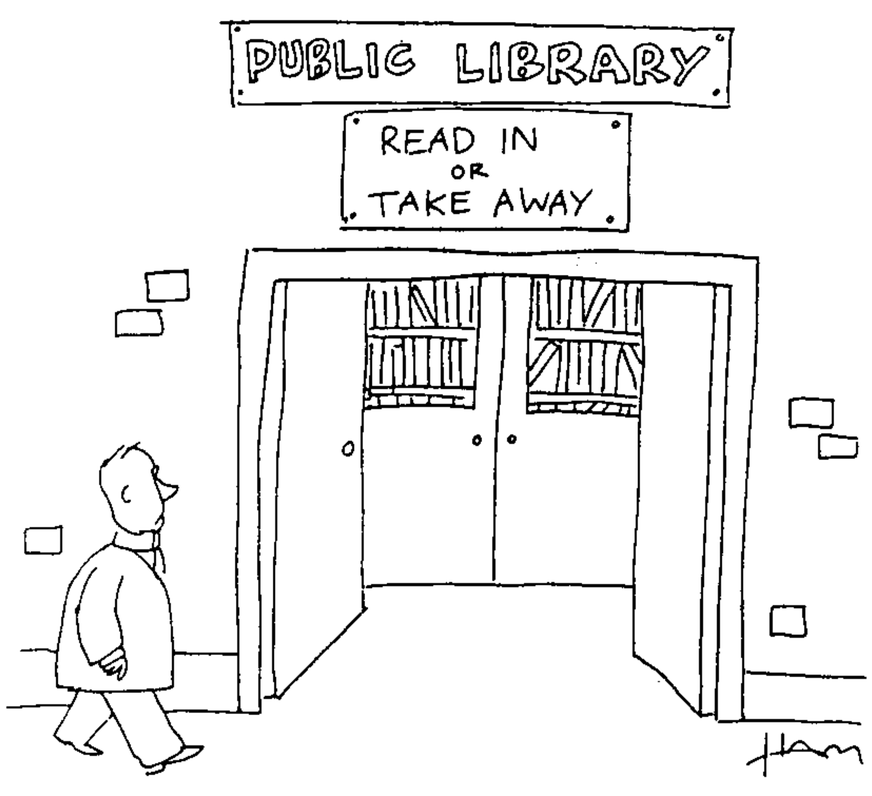
Janet Street-Porter: What fascinates me about both of you is that you're totally ideas driven, you guys know what makes people tick.

Dave Stewart: They're not all tick. Some are, like, pretty clever really, which is just as worrying in a different way.

Will Self: I can't eat a packet of crisps without thinking of its metaphoric, semaphoric and sophomorphic implications. It's as if every crisp is a slice of deep-fried sick, and that's how post-Watergate society drags itself about like a decapitated nun, *vis à vis* death and disfigurement. I switch in on Wittgenstein's vision of a post-holocaust buggy-ride there.

Dave Stewart: Real downer.

Janet Street-Porter: I bet you two guys are great in bed too! Lorluvaduck! Talk about giving great infotainment! You're really hot and mega and you're so modern you make me wanna boogie! Ciao!



PRIVATE EYE BOOK SIGNINGS

Come and meet

Ian Hislop, Craig Brown, Tony Husband, Barry Fantoni and Richard Ingrams

who will be signing copies of the new PRIVATE EYE books:

The 4th & Final Secret Diary of John Major, Son of Yobs, Magic (Private) Eye and The Private Eye Book of Craig Brown Parodies

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Dillons The Bookstore,
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Friday 1 December from 12.30 to 1.30pm

If you are unable to attend, signed copies can be reserved by telephone: 0171 839 4411.

Just published: **The Private Eye Book of Craig Brown Parodies** — £4.99.

"Parody at its best" — Nicholas Bagnall, Sunday Telegraph 29/10/95.

Literary Review

Big Delia

Delia Smith's Winter Collection

(BBC Books, £15.99)

THE statistics are grotesque. *Delia Smith's Winter Collection* is one of the fastest selling books of all time, with half a million copies sold in the first week of publication. It's been reprinted seven times in the last month and the BBC claims to have shifted nearly a million in the last month. Your mum's got one, hasn't she? She has, you know.

In the bestseller lists, it goes without saying, it's the number one and it's going to stay there for an awfully long time. After all, the third bestselling hardback manual is still *Delia Smith's Summer Collection* (£14.99), still flowing out of the shops after 114 weeks.

As if that were not enough, Delia Smith retreads are also at the top of the paperback sections. Her *Complete Cookery Course* (£9.99), originally published in 1982 and endlessly reprinted and recycled, is at number two. At number three, we have *Delia Smith's Christmas* (£8.99), enjoying its sixth season as a cash-cow.

BBC Books is so gung ho about Delia's ability to slay the punters that it has flatly refused to participate in discounting the *Winter Collection*, and most bookshops, including the big chains, are still having to list it at the full price. However, the supermarkets have adopted it as a loss-leader, nonetheless, at their own expense: Woolworth's will do you one for £10.99 and Asda for a quid less than that, which presumably leaves them no profit at all but represents unmissable value as a stiff poke in the eye for the competition.

So how does bloody Delia do it? The obvious explanation of her success is that like most of the book-trade, it's television-led. Jane Austen, *Inspector Morse*, *Brother Cadfael*, Paula Yates, *The X-Files*, Victor Meldrew, *Men Behaving Badly*, Rick Stein, Jancis Robinson: most bestselling books are spin-offs and freeze-frames. Quite apart from the programme itself, bloody Delia has had her name and face on the cover of every issue of *Radio Times* for the last six weeks, possibly another record. With this much pushing, she could sell bags of sand for putting in salads and people would rush out to buy them.

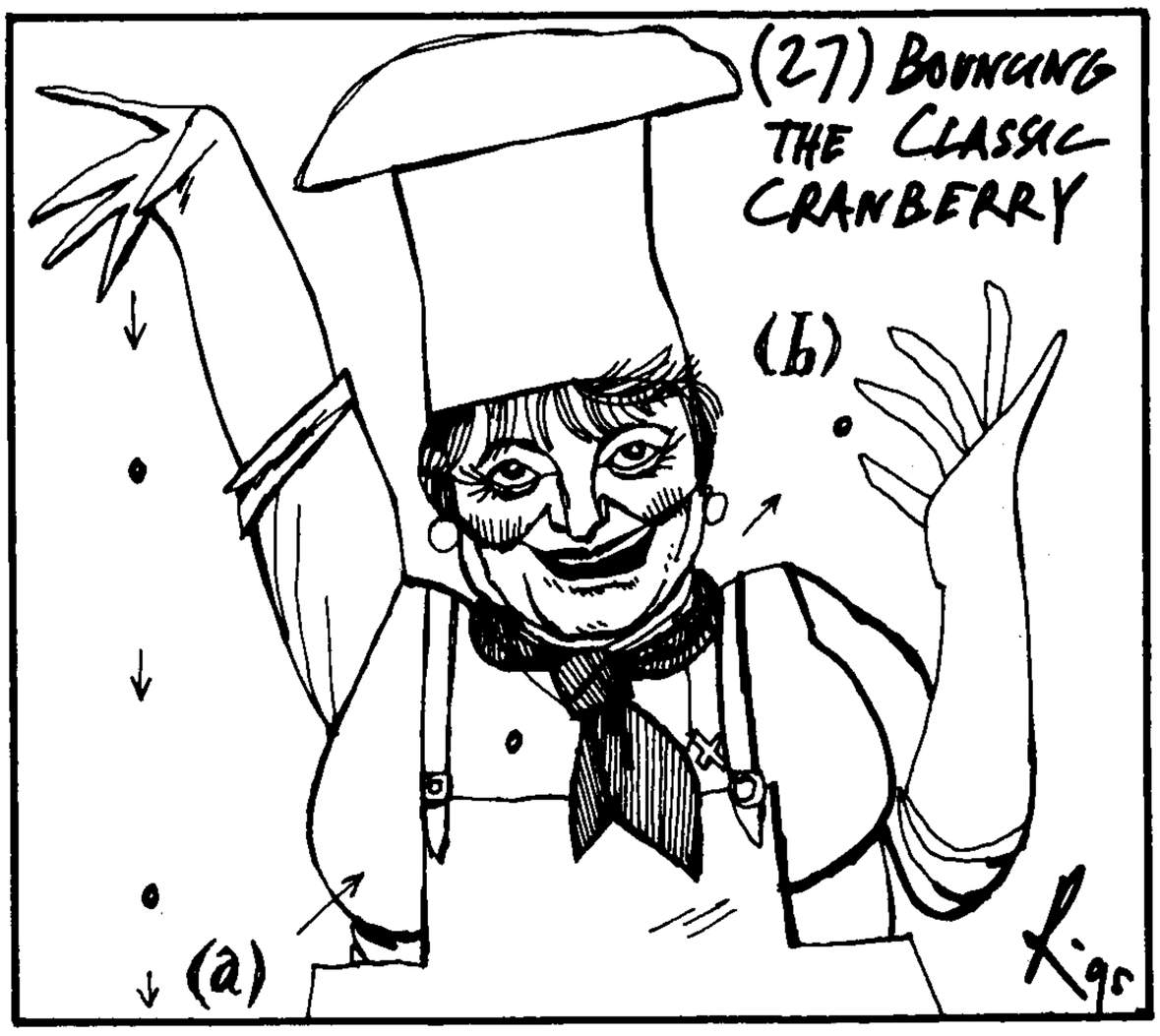
It still doesn't quite account for the doggy devotion she commands. What her followers say to explain it is that "her recipes really work". So they should, don't you think? After all, it's not as if they're original. Many of these recipes are in every crappy old cookbook that's ever been published, including the one that came free with your mum's electric oven in 1954 and is still in the back of the cupboard somewhere. Braised Steak! Irish Stew! Roast Potatoes! Mashed Potatoes! Steak and Kidney Pudding! Where does she find them? How do they do that?

Even Delia's a bit embarrassed about it. When she knows it's old hat she puts a brave face on it and calls it Traditional, Classical, Luxury or Authentic. Thus we have Classic Roast Pork, Traditional Yorkshire Pudding, Luxury Fish Pie, Roast Ribs of Traditional Beef... (wrong place for the "traditional" there, surely dear? Never mind, they won't notice).

Just once or twice she tries the opposite tactic, pretending to look to the future. Thus a bog-standard recipe for prawn cocktail is fatuously called Prawn Cocktail 2000 — "here, in all its former glory, is a starter quite definitely fit for the new millennium!" Oh dear.

Her other great resource for making the recipes seem new and interesting is to adopt some daft new ingredient and stick it into virtually everything within reach. In the *Summer Klekshun*, it was blasted limes; this time round, it's bleeding cranberries.

It gets to be like the Python rat joke: confit of cranberries; cranberry and orange pie; mincemeat with cranberries; cranberry chutney; cabbage with cranberries; cranberry-flavoured condoms (just checking you're still awake); venison steaks with cranberry Cumberland sauce; cranberry fun. Yep, cranberry fun: "We've also had great fun testing their freshness — to do this you bounce them and the higher they bounce the fresher they are!" says fun-loving Delia. Better than sex, probably, cranberry-bouncing, for some of us anyway.



So what, apart from cranberries stuffed in every crevice, has Delia got that others haven't? Patience with culinary ineptitude, mainly. Delia made her name on BBC Continuing Education and she still writes her recipes as if instructing panicky retards with a hearing problem who don't have English as their first language. She coaxes and soothes and reassures like billy-ho, and never rashly assumes any knowledge or commonsense.

This recipe for Warm Lentil Salad begins with a typical assumption of boneheaded ignorance: "First you need to cook the lentils," she commands, putting at least half the class right already, before going on to tell you how "to do this". At the end of nearly every recipe, she thoughtfully reminds you to "serve" the food — you know, just in case you dimly try to wear it or drive it away.

More than this, Delia has a genius for the cosy and the comfy. She's selling not so much recipes as the security we've lost. More and more people live alone in misery — but chez Delia family happiness abounds: "Puddings steaming merrily on the stove, the smell of home baking and the evocative aroma and the sound of a joint sizzling in the oven after a long frosty walk".

"We all need to be warm, cosy and comforted," she says. Our lives together may not make us feel so good but at least we can stuff our faces with Steamed Treacle Sponge Pudding. What a comfort! No wonder we love her.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

■ *THE long hot summer was a godsend for outdoor events promoters — bar one, it seems.*

A company called Music and Fireworks held a series of concerts at Radley College, the school near Oxford, which appeared to be hugely successful: they attracted crowds of 5,000 to 6,000 paying up to £25 a head.

However, when artists sent in invoices they were dismayed to learn that Music and Fireworks was broke. Creditors include the Philharmonia and Wren orchestras, owed around £30,000 each; the total debt being £400,000 to 100 organisations and individuals. Readers will be relieved to learn that Radley was paid in full.

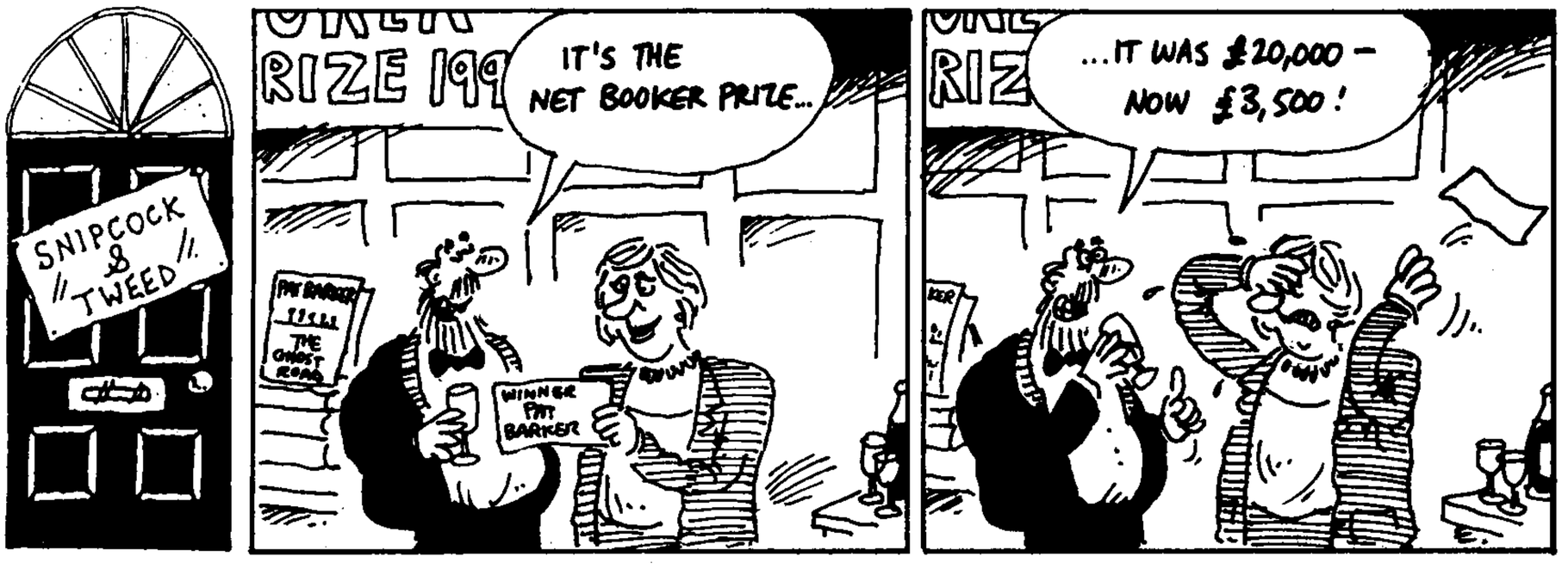
Music and Fireworks was run by Karen Gadd. She has been in the music promotions business since 1981 when she set up Grapestar Ltd. In 1983 she also helped found Music at Oxford, a registered charity in the same line of business. While the charity thrived the commercial side of her business did not. Over the years she had a number of companies with different names and Music and Fireworks was the latest to run into difficulties.

Gadd's relationship with fellow trustees of Music at Oxford was never healthy. They tended to resign rather frequently, complaining of Gadd's potential conflict of interest. In 1993 the Charity Commissioners, acting on a tip-off, investigated Music at Oxford. It gave it a clean bill of health but the report was never published. Gadd and her husband Geoffrey Haines resigned as trustees.

According to well placed sources, Music and Fireworks was already insolvent in June, before contracts for the Radley concerts were signed. The concerts were to be sponsored by Oxford car-dealers City Motors, which lent a vehicle. But in that month City Motors was asked to change the name on the vehicle to "Oxford Festivals".

While creditors pursue Karen Gadd, the good news is that "Oxford Festivals" is alive and well and promoting a series of concerts at Raymond Blanc's restaurant, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons. Karen Gadd resigned from that company on 18 September, just before Music and Fireworks went into liquidation, but it is still operating from the same offices.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'



footnotes

SCAMALOT (2)

YOU have to be very careful when listening to Peter "Oflot" Davis, regulator of the national lottery. When he says the word "loss" he could mean "enormous profit".

On 24 March last year 86 MPs from all parties signed a Commons motion expressing "alarm" at plans to hand the national lottery over to one huge private company. "It is not necessary," said the motion, "for such an operator to be a large company with substantial borrowing, overheads, costs and salaries. The limited number of tasks necessary to be performed can be achieved by one well-paid executive and a relatively small staff."

OFLOT, WHATALOT: Peter Davis (right) withTim Holley

The motion noted that similar small-staffed lotteries ran perfectly well in other countries, and called on Oflot to ensure the same sort of thing in this one. Instead Davis handed the lottery to Camelot, an absurdly huge company made up of five main suppliers to the lottery.

On 5 September last year, Davis wrote defending his decision to Sir Ivan Lawrence, a Tory MP who had signed the critical motion. Oflot Davis said he did not agree with the widely-held view that Camelot and all its rich shareholders would make far too much profit from the lottery. He concluded: "I expect Camelot to make a net loss during the early years of the licence."

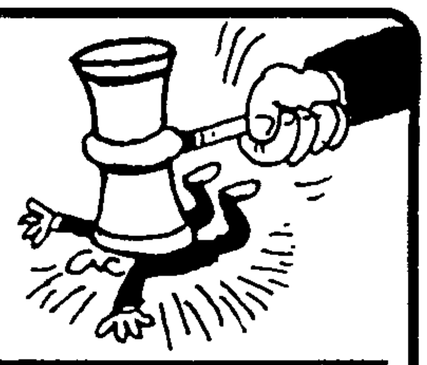
In June this year Camelot produced results which showed that it was already making huge profits and would certainly go on doing so. Mr Davis wrote again to Sir Ivan. "The point I sought to make in my letter of 5 September 1994 was not that Camelot would not make a profit for over four years. It was always expected to make a small operating profit before then." Thus: "I expect a net loss" became "a small operating profit was always expected". Mr Davis added charmingly: "Re-reading my letter I fully see how it was misinterpreted."

If Mr Davis really did expect Camelot to make a loss, he was about the only expert in the country who did so. In May last year — before Camelot was appointed — City analyst Nomura Research predicted: "Once the lottery is up and running the partners could be generating about a hundred million in operating profit a year."

This was an understatement. Camelot secretly circulates figures for its "retained funds", a good slice of which will end up in pure profit. On 4 November total "retained funds" stood at a fantastic £378 million, a figure that has been rising by £7 million every week for a year. As everyone except Mr Davis and Camelot directors predicted, the start-up and investment costs of running the lottery, compared with the enormous, guaranteed cash income, are negligible. The result is that five lucky companies who have swiped all the juiciest lottery contracts without even bothering to put many of them out to tender (see *Eye* 883) will be coining in millions hand over fist, without risk and without competition, from money which would otherwise go to good causes.

PS: Mr Davis is highly qualified for his job. He is an auditing accountant who learnt his trade at Price Waterhouse. He was deputy executive chairman of the carpet giant Harris Queensway from 1983-87. Harris Queensway was sold in 1988 and collapsed in 1990. Mr Davis went on to the board of a Lloyd's company, Sturge Holdings. In the five years Mr Davis was there, Sturge profits plunged from £31m to £1m, and in 1993-94 Sturge made a loss of £15.5 million.

Beak of the Week



Mrs Joan Preston JP

■ IN JULY 1993 Mervyn Bold, 28, of Congleton was admitted to Parkside mental hospital. He was there for eight weeks, during which time he was further distressed by the death of his father.

Soon after being discharged from the hospital he was summoned to South Cheshire magistrates' court in Congleton, Mrs Preston up. He was told he owed £455.12, including costs, for poll tax for the year 1990-91. He said he had no money, was out of work and was living on income support.

Mrs Preston and her colleague sent him to prison for 90 days. He spent 14 days in Walton prison, Liverpool, and was freed on bail pending a judicial review in the high court which comes up soon.

Mrs Preston told the court she made a bit of a booboo. "We had decided in the retiring room that a period of 14 days was commensurate with the sum due. Unfortunately in the announcement of the sentence I inadvertently referred to the maximum period which had been mentioned during the hearing by the officer appearing on behalf of the borough council. The error was not noticed by my colleague."

SWW: Shit, Water & Waste

■ UNIVERSAL rejoicing in Northern Ireland greets the dumping of another Tory party manifesto promise: "to transfer water and sewage services to the private sector". The department of the environment tells the *Eye* that water and sewage in Northern Ireland "will not be privatised in the life of this parliament".

Less happy are the English privatised water company directors who had been looking forward to picking up another lucrative private water monopoly. Leading the pack was South West Water, which is already in Northern Ireland in a big way.

SWW is a specialist in shit. Following its brilliant "Clean Sweep" project to fill St Ives Bay with the stuff, it hopes soon to be dumping thousands of tons of Belfast rubbish in a site of special scientific interest.

SWW subsidiary Hall Waste owns a quarry at Magheramorne, East Antrim, and has applied for planning permission to dump rubbish there. Toxic leachate is expected to pollute Larne Lough, and farmers, councillors, Protestant and Catholic churches, schools — almost everyone in the area, even Roy Beggs the local Unionist MP — is against the idea.

South West Water takes courage from the fact that none of the busybody agencies that whinge about pollution in England — the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and the waste regulation authorities — has any power in Northern Ireland. Free enterprise runs free, except for one branch of the DoE. P.S. Sir Geoffrey Chipperfield KCB, former permanent secretary of the DoE's Property Services Agency, sits on the board of South West Water.

The Man From Lockerbie

■ THE foreign office tells Tam Dalyell MP that its man who "from 1988 to 1991 was responsible for the international aspects of the Lockerbie affair" was Andrew Green. Mr Green has had an exciting career.

He was named in the diaries of Oliver North, the US presidential aide who set up the Iran-Contra "arms for hostages" scandal in the 1980s. According to the diaries Green, who was a counsellor in the British embassy in Washington, met North in May 1984 to discuss a series of secret arms-for-hostages meetings in London later that year. In 1985 Green was transferred to the embassy at Saudi Arabia where he lasted through both Al Yamamah arms deals signed by Margaret Thatcher and King Fahd — the biggest arms deals in the history of the world.

In 1988 he came back to London to take charge of Lockerbie. At first the foreign office suspected that a Palestinian gang succoured by the Syrian government was responsible for the Lockerbie bomb. Although the case against the gang was overwhelming, the FO's suspicions faded as the Syrian government joined the British and US governments in the Gulf war against Saddam Hussein.

In 1991 Mr Green became ambassador to Syria. Later that year Syria was cleared by the US and British governments of all suspicions over Lockerbie. Mr Green is now back at the FO in London in charge of all Middle East policy.

All Quiet On The Killing Front

"I VERY much hope we are never called upon to discuss Armley in the public arena." Thus wrote Mr William Howard, of the asbestos company Turner & Newall, to a business colleague in 1974.

By Armley he meant T&N's Leeds factory where at least 100 workers died from asbestos-related cancers. All these deaths could have been prevented by elementary observation of long-standing rules protecting workers against asbestos.

Now June Hancock, who lived outside the factory and is laid low by cancer caused by asbestos, and Evelyn Margerison, whose husband died from it, have won an historic court victory and damages against the firm. Their rejoicing was generously reported. Less widely-known is the devious way the company systematically and illegally denied the necessary information to the plaintiffs.

Back in 1991 Middlesbrough solicitor Brian Potter, acting for T&N, signed a high court affidavit that "all documents formerly in the possession of the defendants have been destroyed or lost between the closure of the factory and the commencement of these proceedings". Accordingly, he concluded — perfectly honestly, since this was the information given him by his clients — "I have not obtained any document held in the possession, power or control of the defendants relevant to any issue in this action" — other than those already disclosed, which were negligible.

Without such documents the case would almost certainly have foundered. But the plaintiffs were saved by the Chase Manhattan Bank, which was also suing T&N for negligence after the company showered the bank's headquarters with brown asbestos.

The bank applied for relevant documents through the US freedom of information act and discovered that hundreds of thousands of documents about asbestos at the Leeds factory were sitting in T&N's documentation centre in Manchester. Chase duly handed over schedules of more than 100,000 documents to the Leeds plaintiffs' lawyers. From these came the 30 huge files which eventually won the case.

VICTORIOUS: June Hancock

In an interview after the verdict June Hancock's barrister, Robin Stewart QC, said: "To my mind it is inconceivable and inexplicable as to how the company could have given that information to their solicitor — that they had no documents — when they had a million documents in the archives."

The case was extensively covered by Vanessa Bridge of the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. In the summer she asked T&N for an interview about the Armley factory. Sue Miller, the company's head of corporate communications, replied that "it will not be possible to conduct an interview" but "should you wish to put forward any specific question in writing, please let me know".

Shortly before the verdict, Vanessa Bridge sent the company a long list of polite and relevant questions. Back came Mrs Miller's reply: "T&N is not prepared to be drawn into a media debate on the subject of asbestos-related litigation." And so: "We shall not be responding to any of the points raised in your letter." Killing people by corporate negligence is, after all, far too trivial a matter for media debate.

P.S. T&N plc gave £75,000 to the Tory Party in the 1990s — rather more than it will pay June Hancock.

GOWRIE'S DOWRY

■ LORD GOWRIE, the chairman of the Arts Council, has agreed to chair Development Securities — obviously without even bothering to read the *Eye*'s account of the firm on 7 October last year.

The driving force behind the company is Martin Landau, a property developer who made the most of the Thatcher boom. In those days his company was called City Merchant Developers. It merged with another big property firm called Imry. The merger was a great success on the stock market — and Landau quickly sold out to yet another consortium for £314 million. Not much later the merged company collapsed leaving Barclays Bank with its biggest ever write-off for a single loan.

Landau returned last year to buy up Development Securities and launch it into the big time. The board was joined by Lord McAlpine, former Tory party treasurer, and David Rowe-Beddoe, the "new broom" appointed by the Tories to clean up the mess at the Welsh Development Agency (WDA).

Development Securities' share price is disappointingly low considering the enormous amount of government work it has clinched. It has won the contract to develop the old MI5 building in Mayfair and is hotly tipped to win an even bigger job at the treasury. In the battle for such contracts Gowrie's "contacts with government" are considered especially valuable.

KANE AND FABLE

■ THE astonishing dirty tricks campaign against former Scotland Yard detective John Gorman after he complained about glass in his British Airways drink has been joined by the *Sunday Times*.

Gorman is suing the world's unfriendliest airline over what he alleges is a campaign of harassment linked to his complaints. The campaign, which includes abusive phone calls traced to British Airways and Heathrow police station, vandalism of his car and an attack by two thugs in which mace was sprayed in his eyes, has been extensively chronicled in the *Eye*. Recently, other papers and the BBC have been taking Mr Gorman seriously. BA's response has been to give journalists an "off the record nudge and wink" that Gorman is a bit of a nutter who is always making frivolous complaints to airlines.

THE STORY PUBLISHED

This theme was taken up in an article by Frank Kane and Mark Francetti in the early editions of the *Sunday Times* on 10 September. They revealed that Mr Gorman, a frequent air traveller who was on 52 flights last year, had been involved in "at least five complaints against airlines in recent years". The only new revelation here was a "complaint" Gorman was alleged to have made to United Airlines in 1992 when a water pipe on a plane burst.

Gorman was amazed. He had made no complaint about the incident, which had affected at least three other passengers. His solicitors demanded an apology. Back came a reply from Alastair "Blubber" Brett, the *ST*'s in-house lawyer. United Airlines, wrote Brett, "went into their computer and confirmed that they had had a complaint from a Mr J. Gorman". The letter went on: "There was some concern over the Christian name of the Gorman on their computer which might have been either a 'Jerry' or a 'John'."

Puzzled beyond endurance, Gorman wrote to the general manager of United Airlines at Heathrow, asking how the airline could have supplied the *Sunday Times* with confidential information which was untrue.

THE STORY DENIED

The airline wrote back. "United Airlines had found no record of a complaint by you or compensation paid to you. You can rest assured that the *Sunday Times* was told by United prior to publication of its article, that we were not able to assist with their story, and that there was no record of any such incident. We were surprised to see the story in the *Sunday Times*"

"Blubber" Brett's letter, was rubbish. United Airlines had not "gone into its computer". In fact they utterly denied the story. How then did the *Sunday Times* publish it?

THE STORY EXPOSED

In May 1993 Mr Gorman's flat was raided by Heathrow police accompanied by a member of BA's investigations branch. The raiding party seized tapes and documents, including a letter to Gorman from United Airlines apologising profusely that a friend's bag had been lost on a recent flight. The letter referred to "your comments concerning the leak on flight 935" and gratuitously enclosed some "upgrade certificates" (allowing passengers to move up a class) which Gorman never used. The interesting feature of the letter was that it was wrongly addressed — to Mr "Gerry" Gorman.

The strange coincidence between the "Gerry" in Blubber Brett's letter and the "Gerry" on this letter suggests that the *Sunday Times* may have seen this letter and concluded from it that Gorman had made a complaint about the leak, which he hadn't. If so, a letter wrongly seized by Heathrow police and BA security somehow found its way to the *Sunday Times* with one purpose only: to smear John Gorman.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

WHILE persisting with a series of legal-public relations offensives in Britain, with the implied threat of a return to sue his tormentors for untold millions, fugitive bankrupt Asil Nadir is struggling in his bid to buy back the Northern Cyprus farm.

Last weekend's collapse of the unrecognised Turkish Cypriot coalition government has given Nadir some much needed breathing space as plans were in place to slap a lien on the income from the two former Polly Peck hotels which represent his main source of cash.

But reports from Northern Cyprus suggest that even if his ally, former premier Dervis Eroglu, returns in a new coalition, collection of $6 million in back taxes and $5.8 million in unpaid loan plus interest will still be high on the governmental agenda.

Furthermore, a company controlled by Nadir and his bonking backer, divorcee Sidika Atalay has failed to make a $1 million payment on the purchase of the Jasmine Court and Palm Beach hotels plus the UniPac packaging business last March. These Polly Peck assets were sold for $7.2 million to Learned, a local company whose two Turkish Cypriot owners promptly flipped the company and the contract to Atalay and Nadir for a small "drink". The initial price was $5.2 million with the balance to come in two payments in October and next February backed by a bank guarantee which may prove problematic. Despite this, Nadir has offered to buy back the unfinished Crystal Cove hotel for $3 million and the Meyna packaging operation in Turkey for $4 million,

Well-informed Turkish Cypriot sources suggest that far from putting up the money herself Sidika Atalay may have borrowed all or part of the $5 million secured on property in Turkey. The loan is said to be very expensive and the source of the money has raised Turkish eyebrows. Certainly it is not believed Nadir will be as cavalier with the lender as he has proved in the past with those from whom he borrowed. And if anyone owns the hotels and UniPac it is not Nadir but Atalay.

Evidence of the continuing cash crisis Nadir faces has also been confirmed by his inability to pay off local creditors as well as the Turkish Cypriot government.

Despite the cash squeeze, at his meeting with joint administrator Chris Barlow last month Nadir is said to have bid not just for Crystal Cove and Meyna but also made an offer to buy back the shell of Polly Peck International itself. Nadir is endeavouring to put together a consortium of "straw men" to make the offer for him and provide a "cut-out" for the administrators to whom Nadir owes almost £400 million. Nadir has recruited former assistant and Polly Peck director Mark Ellis who is believed to have interested a possible Canadian investor.

Nadir has talked of bidding $20 million for PPI — a figure the administrators and creditors are unlikely to accept. Especially as it would almost certainly be on the usual some now, most later basis. There is also the little problem of the near £400 million judgement. But Nadir still dreams of a Polly Peck comeback enabling him to sue the administrators for maladministration!

Nadir lacks funds with which not only to realise a comeback but also to carry out his legal threats against the Serious Farce Office. Instead he uses his former adviser Elizabeth Forsyth (who faces fraud charges) and his sister Bilge Nevzat (who has sued for wrongful arrest) as stalking horses, the former at the taxpayers' cost.

This lack of funds explains why, despite the PR bluster, no Nadir legal action has yet been started to challenge his prosecution. This is not expected to change even if the law lords rule later this month in favour of surety Ramadan Guney and declare Nadir's bail was not properly taken.

The Nadir apologists may suggest such a decision means he is no longer a fugitive and so free to return to Britain. This is not the SFO or police view. They maintain that Nadir remains a fugitive because he was personally required to return to court to face the £30 million fraud charges even if there had been no sureties. And without Nadir here it is still considered unlikely that the court of appeal will be interested in hearing his case.

CURIOUSER and curiouser becomes the tale of how Sterling Publishing Group came to lose at least £3.5 million on bad debts from advertising sales to the former Soviet Union. This helped plunge the company into a £9.5 million loss.

Former employees tell of up to 200 Russians being hired illegally to staff a sales drive which saw the CIS states contribute first £5 million, then £14 million and finally £28 million (40 percent) to sales between 1993 and 1995. No check was made on the background of many of these sales people or their connections in Russia. There is much talk of ex-KGB and mobski involvement.

All the Russians were paid up-front commissions of up to 20 percent on receipt of orders for advertisements in Sterling's little seen magazines and reference books. This enabled the Russians to collect several thousand pounds a week. Their cheques cashed they would happily return to Russia.

It was then that the problems would start. Up to 70 percent of the advertisements sold in some cases turned out to be phoney. The Russians simply arranged for their pals to fax dummy orders so that they could collect the commissions.

In many cases it became quickly apparent that the sales were phoney because no copy appeared for the ads. Other advertisers could not be located when it came time to pay on publication. Many of those who could be found refused to pay and when Sterling employed Russian debt collectors they received death threats. Yet many of those responsible continued to be employed even as the bad debts grew.

So where were the Sterling directors while this fiasco was in the making? According to former employees, managing director Michael Summers and director Daniel Coughlan would have been hard pressed not to know of the growing problems from early 1994 onwards such was the flow of bad or phoney business. David Laws, who ran the Russian sales operation, quit in mid-1994 with a £50,000 goodbye after earning six-figure commissions.

Yet the Sterling board would have shareholders believe that the Russian disaster only became apparent in January 1995. Only if they were asleep at the wheel, according to former insiders. If Sterling's institutional shareholders weren't similarly soundly asleep they should press Summers

"Heard the latest?"

and Coughlan — not to mention auditors Price Waterhouse — about what they knew about the phoney Russian sales and when they knew it.

THERE ARE few businessmen better at extracting grovelling apologies than Sir James Goldsmith — as the *Observer* proved with its recent recantation of untrue allegations about the jolly green giant defiling the Mexican tropical forest to build his hacienda hideaway.

Sadly there was no room amid the fulsome recital of Goldsmith's Mexican environmentalist credentials to refer to his involvement in such "green" investments as environmentally friendly gold miners Newmont Mining and oil drillers Basic Petroleum.

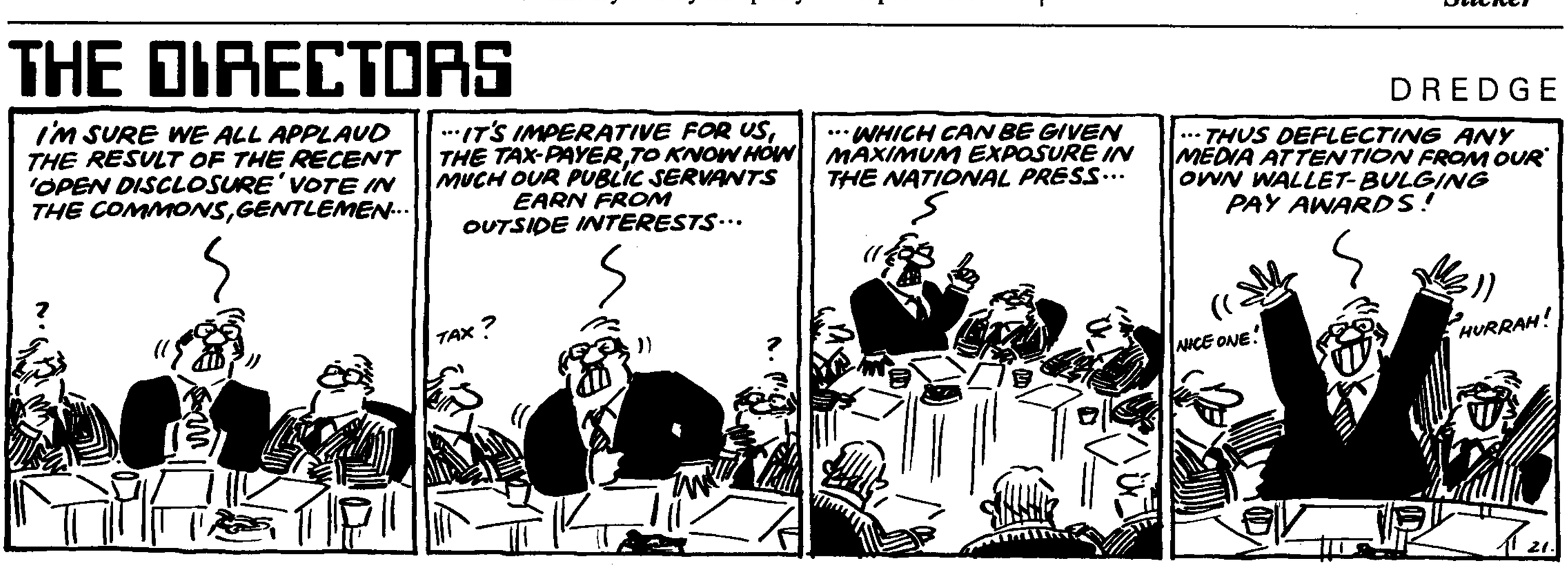
Between 1990 and 1993 Goldsmith was the largest shareholder (42 percent) in Newmont which is the largest American gold miner. Newmont and its associates' activities in the US, Australia, Peru and Tahiti have thrilled environmentalists, American Indians and Aborigines alike. Similar thanks have come from Guatemala's rural population for the contribution to their well being made by Basic in which Goldsmith controls at least 17 per cent.

What a pity that such "green" good deeds should go unheralded. *Private Eye* is happy to fill an unwarranted gap in public awareness of the achievements of a tireless protector of the environment.

THE Jivraj family of Buckingham International ill-fame have scored yet another success. Their private company Calfayre collapsed in July owing the Den Norske bank £17.5 million, plus £4.3 million in unpaid interest.

The loan was secured on the Holiday Inn in Cromwell Road, west London. Sadly it would seem that, apart from trade creditors, the big loser is the Jivraj's Jersey company Naaz Holdings, which was owed £8.7 million. This thought may comfort Buckingham's non-Jivraj shareholders who were wiped out when the company collapsed in May after years of incestuous deals which had benefited Naaz at Buckingham's expense.

'Slicker'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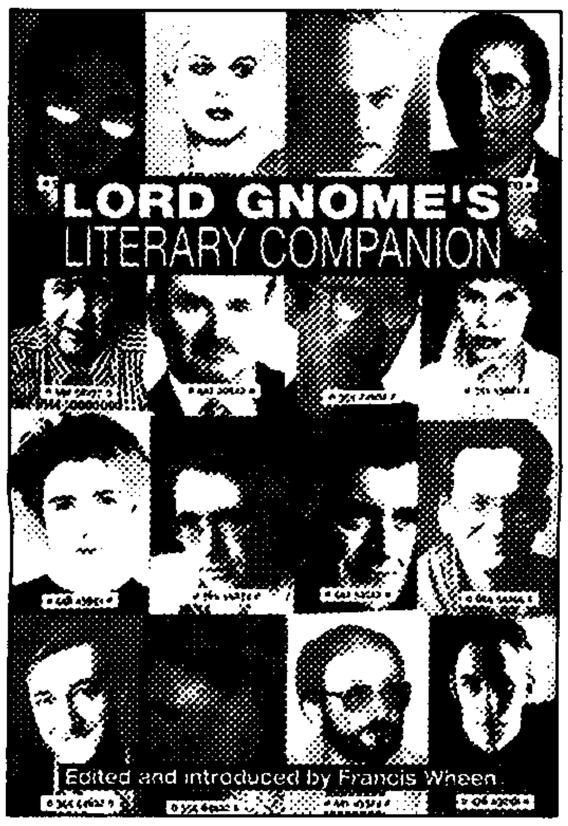

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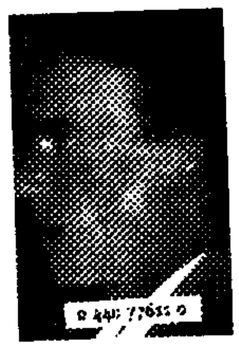

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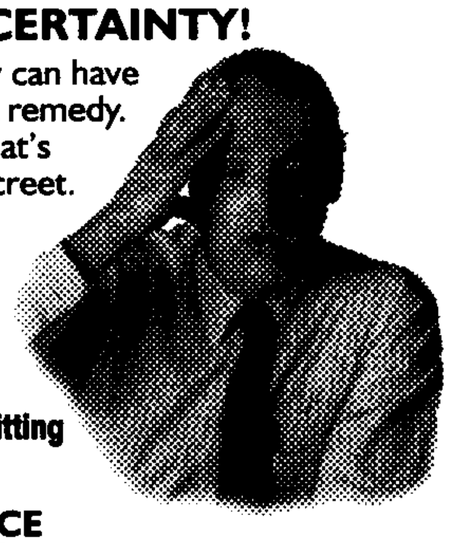

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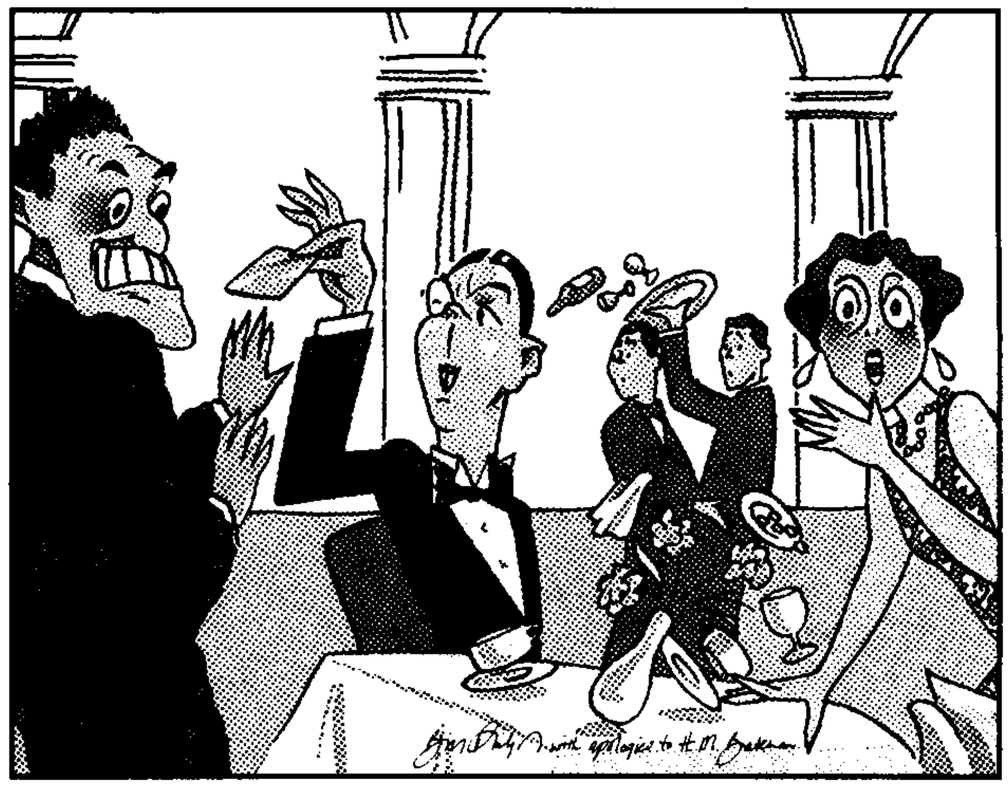

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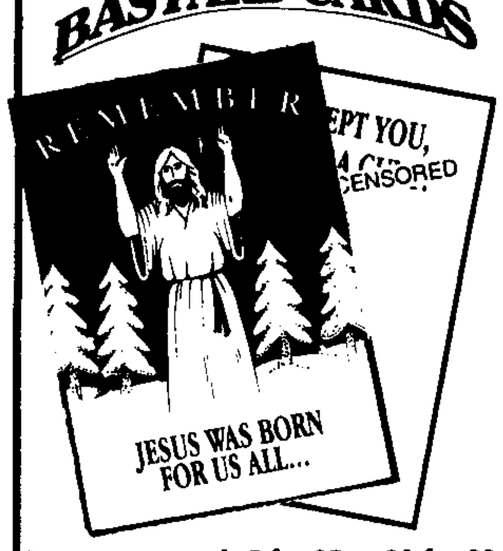

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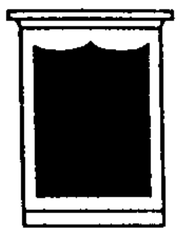

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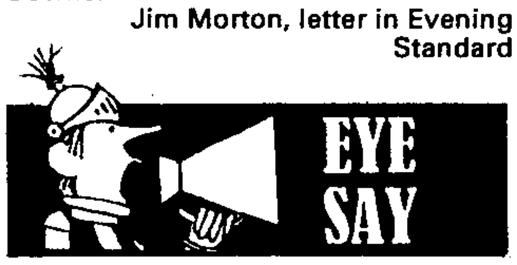
Jim Morton, letter in Evening Standard



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SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray. See Page 30.

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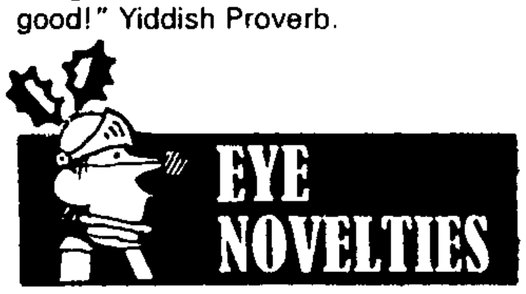

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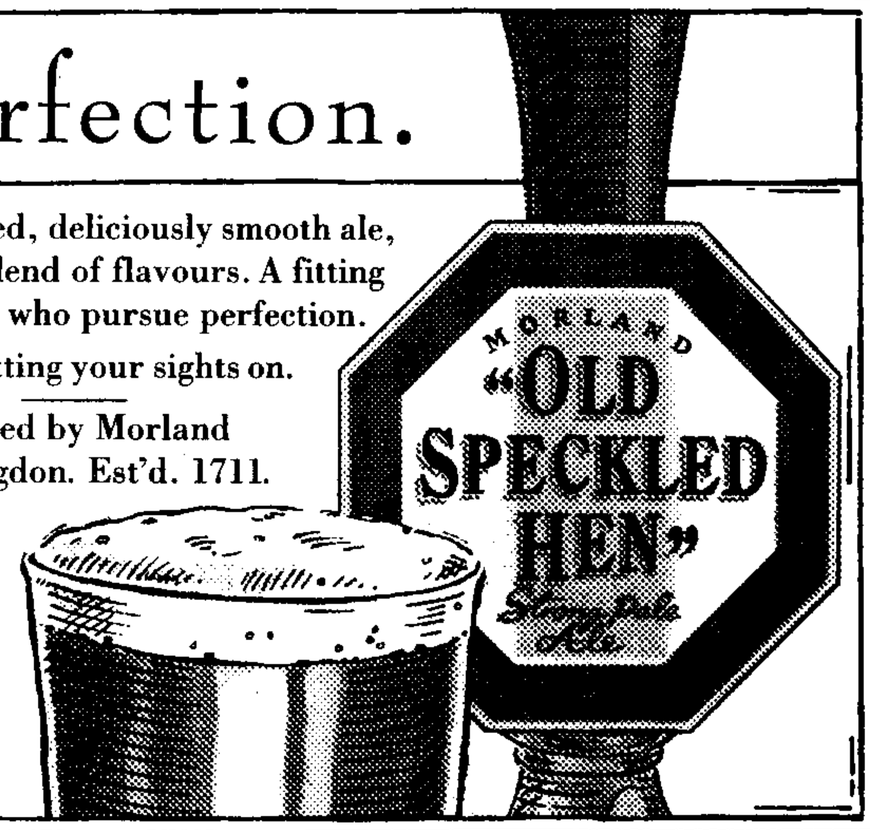

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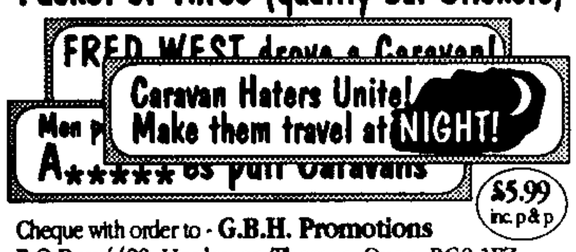

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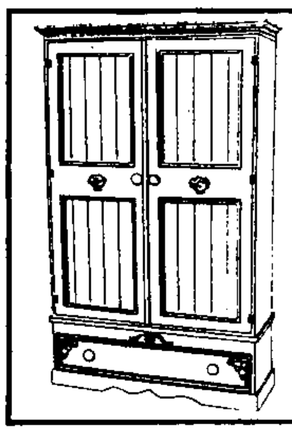

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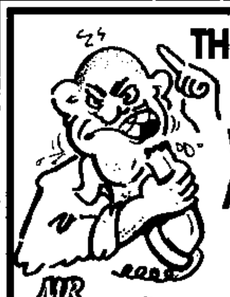

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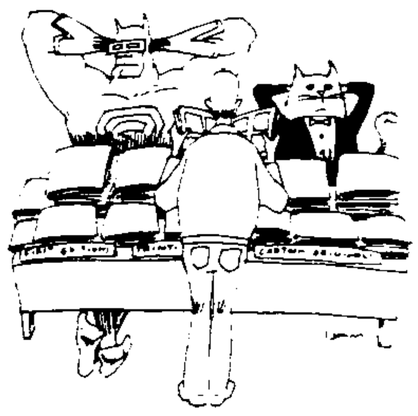

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